ONTARIO TEACHERS' MANUALS

WRITING

AUTHORIZED BY
THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

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Helen M Hoodliffe.

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TORONTO:
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY OF CANADA LIMITED
1935

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WRITING

PUBLIC AND SEPARATE SCHOOL COURSE OF STUDY

DETAILS

FORM I. JUNIOR GRADE

The development of letter forms
Exercises in writing at the black-board and at the desk to acquire easy movement and lightness of stroke
Black-board practice.

FORM I. SENIOR GRADE

Development of letter forms continued
Exercises in writing at the black-board and at the desk to acquire ease of movement and lightness of stroke
The use of the pen with easy freehand exercises toward the end of the year.

FORM II

Practice at the desk and at the black-board to develop the correct forms of small letters, capitals, and figures
Movement exercises to acquire ease and control of movement
Spacing and joining
Copy books or graded exercises.

FORM III

Copy books and graded exercises

Accuracy in letter forms, and freedom and control of movement

Spacing and joining

Simple accounts, bills, receipts, and cheques.

FORM IV

Regular exercises in writing, including business forms, to secure legibility, beauty, lightness of touch, and speed.

WRITING

I. WRITING AN ART

Although writing has usually been considered a manual art rather than a science, yet it must be understood from the beginning that it is not wholly manual. No doubt the *art* of writing, especially when well and firmly established, is largely manual, but the *act* of writing is mental as well as manual. Especially is this true in the case of children first learning to write. At first, the proper image of the form to be made must be in the mind of the pupil before he can be expected to reproduce it, either with chalk or with a pencil. The motions used in forming the letters must be guided by the dictates of the brain, until, through constant and intelligent repetition, the hand will, apparently, without conscious direction, reproduce the symbolic representation of an image already existing in the mind. It is thus that the motions used in writing become largely habitual or mechanical, and the act of writing becomes an established habit. In this way the writer is enabled to concentrate his mind almost wholly on what he is writing, because the production of the letters, proper movement, and posture have become an unconscious habit.

II. DUTIES OF THE TEACHER

In the domain of knowledge it is very generally recognized that a teacher cannot teach what he does not know. Naturally it is true, too, in the domain of skill, that a teacher cannot teach what he cannot do. In order to

possess both the skill and the knowledge demanded in the teaching of writing, it is necessary for the teacher to undergo a thorough training in the principles and the practice of writing.

A teacher who has had this thorough training should be capable of instructing pupils so as to secure good results. For, during the process of acquiring training, the teacher will have had an opportunity, personally, of applying the principles laid down for the development of a correct writing movement and, in practising the exercises, will have experienced the various difficulties and discouragements that pupils meet in their work. At the same time there will be developed within the teacher the sympathy and enthusiasm so necessary for teaching writing to children. Having travelled the road himself, he will know the rough places, and will know how best to help the pupils over them.

From this it follows that every teacher who is deficient in either knowledge or skill, or in both, should set apart a portion of his spare time for systematic, daily study of the principles contained in this Manual and systematic daily practice of the Lessons contained in the *Ontario Writing Courses*.

By systematic, intelligent practice, the teacher will learn, not only the requirements of good posture but, at the same time, how to count for the exercises and how fast to make each one. Thus he will be able to lead his pupils, step by step, through the various phases of posture, pen-holding, muscular relaxation, and application of movement to form, until these requirements become firmly fixed as habits.

Another fact will also be impressed upon his mind. That is, that too much must not be expected of the pupils

in the beginning, especially in the matter of neatness and control. Until they have acquired considerable command over their muscles, the pupils will not be able to do neat, legible work. During this period, the writing will, from the standpoint of these two qualities, be poorer than some might expect from the amount of practice devoted to it. However, by paying particular attention to the length of initial and final strokes and to the arrangement of the words, much unnecessarily poor work can be eliminated. The point to bear in mind is that all written work, whether it be language, spelling, composition, or number, should be done with good muscular movement, no matter how poor and uncontrolled the writing may be at first. To allow pupils to have one writing movement during the writing lesson and another for ordinary work will surely defeat the aim of the teaching. If there is a definite understanding between the pupils and the teacher relative to the use of muscular movement, no trouble should arise.

III. VALUE OF IMITATION IN LEARNING TO WRITE

There are two kinds of imitation that may be used as a stimulus to improvement in writing: (1) Imitation of a finished product in the form of a copy, and (2) imitation of a person going through the actual process of writing. The trend of instruction in writing at the present time is decidedly away from too much reliance being placed upon the mere copy, however perfect it may be. Indeed, its very perfection may be the cause of a loss of faith in it. Formerly the pupils were required to imitate the engraved model of a lifeless copy, rather than the living process of writing itself. It is a well-known fact that a child can imitate the process much better than he can the finished product. Therefore the process of writing which the pupil

has to acquire can be best developed by watching the teacher doing the actual work, both on the black-board and on paper.

In opposition to this view it is sometimes said that the average teacher is ordinarily not capable of writing a model good enough for the pupils to imitate. If that is true, it can hardly be recognized that he is capable of teaching writing, even with the aid of good copies. Should such be the case, the teacher owes it to himself as well as to the pupils to rectify such a grave defect in respect to his aptitude for teaching, for it is now generally recognized that a person who cannot perform an act is not qualified to teach another to do it.

IV. VALUE OF METHOD

In the past, various styles of writing have been used in our schools. Doubtless some of these possessed more merit than others. But the failure to produce good writing cannot be attributed entirely to any particular system. The fault lay rather in the indifferent and ineffective methods of teaching. A knowledge of the forms of the letters and the principles upon which these forms were based was thought to be all that was necessary to make good writing universal. Now it is generally recognized that such teaching came short of the mark, because it failed to comprehend that the essential element in learning to write is *movement*. This fact is receiving general recognition at present, and teachers-in-training during recent years have had a course of instruction in the practice of muscular-movement writing, as well as one in the theory.

But it must be understood that each teacher should work out his own method of teaching, using the general

principles of muscular movement as the basis of his plan. The same method will not always prove effective in the hands of every teacher, nor will it prove effective in its application to every pupil. Every teacher, then, should have a method that exhibits his own personality and that will offer variety in its application to the individual needs of the pupils.

There should be a systematic, orderly effort on the part of the teacher to develop correct posture, with special regard to the laws of health and the establishment of correct writing habits, having reference to pen-holding, position of the paper, and proper writing movement, so that the pupils may write freely, easily, rapidly, and with the least expenditure of mental and physical energy.

When a proper method of teaching writing has been used with pupils, the nerves and the brain should be so trained that they work in unison. That is, the pupil will be able to concentrate his mind chiefly on the train of thought he is engaged in expressing, while the mechanical production of the letters will be relegated to the realm of habit. And all the time he should be sitting in a healthful, hygienic position, which he should be able to maintain for whatever length of time his age and strength determine.

V. AMOUNT OF TIME TO BE DEVOTED TO WRITING

Naturally, the more time given to teaching writing and to proper practice, the more rapid will be the progress. Owing to the extent of the present-day curriculum, not more than thirty minutes daily at the outside can be allotted to this subject in either the Public or High Schools. However, more time than this is not really necessary, provided that what is learned during the writing

lesson, such as posture, movement, etc., is actually put to use in doing all written work. Unless pupils are thus trained, what they learn in the writing period will be of little practical value, and a lesson period two or three times as long would not be sufficient to establish correct writing habits. The main point to remember is that fifteen minutes or so each day is of far greater value than one hour every fourth day. The longer session tends only to fatigue the pupils unduly. To sit too long in one position will result in more or less nervousness, which may develop later into the dreaded "writer's cramp".

For very young pupils the ideal period should not be more than ten minutes twice daily, if the time can be spared; for Second Book pupils about fifteen minutes; for Third Book pupils about twenty minutes; and for Fourth Book pupils about twenty-five minutes. Pupils in grades above the Fourth should have about thirty minutes a day during the first year and three periods of similar duration during the second year. If such an arrangement of the time-table for any or all of the grades is not possible, it would be advisable to consult the balanced time-table on page 180 of the Ontario Normal School Manual on *School Management,* and make whatever provision for the subject the teacher considers feasible. The main point to keep in mind is that teaching writing really consists in teaching pupils correct habits of posture and movement and in impressing upon them that the writing lesson should teach them how to sit when they are writing during the other lessons of the day.

VI. HOME WORK IN WRITING

As has been pointed out elsewhere, the chief object aimed at in teaching writing is the creation of proper

writing habits. It is essential, then, that all written work be done under the watchful supervision of the teacher. If pupils be permitted to do unsupervised work, there is a danger that they will fail to observe the rules of correct posture, pen-holding, and movement. Should such a condition be persisted in, it will not be long before some of them, probably a majority, will go back to the former unhygienic position and to the equally pernicious habit of finger movement. Considering this danger, it is not wise to assign home work to any pupils lower than Form IV, and these pupils of Form IV should be permitted to do home work only when they have mastered the writing movement sufficiently to be able to use it skilfully in all their written work. Assigning work to be done at home to pupils such as these would add greatly to their control over their writing muscles, for "practice makes perfect". But it must be borne in mind that the essential element in the practice is *quality* rather than *quantity*.

VII. VALUE OF MOVEMENT

Movement is the foundation of all good writing. Therefore the problem of teaching writing is centred in the development of the proper writing movement. If the teacher could, by some magic, put every pupil in possession of the proper movement, the problem confronting him would be greatly simplified. Unfortunately, no such magic has yet been discovered. The problem must be faced. The difficulties that arise from differences in the size, age, and mental capacity of the pupils must be taken into consideration and due allowance made for these differences. Some pupils seem to acquire the proper movement from the beginning, while others never seem able to acquire it at all.

Investigation has shown that the shape of the hand has considerable influence upon the ease with which pupils acquire the proper movement. Pupils with hands and fingers of normal size rarely have much trouble in writing with almost pure muscular movement, while those with hands either abnormally fat or abnormally thin, especially the latter, almost always have great difficulty in mastering the movement. In the case of the fat hands, the difficulty arises from the lack of mobility in the fingers, while in the case of the thin hands it comes from an excess of nerves.

It must not be understood from this that pupils with abnormal hands cannot learn to write; but they cannot learn to write well. The movement they use is usually a mixture of muscular and finger movement with the latter predominating. The result is that their writing lacks freedom and control and sometimes neatness. However, there are exceptions among pupils with abnormal hands; some do learn to write fairly well.

VIII. MUSCULAR MOVEMENT

The name "Muscular" is applied to this writing movement primarily because it is produced by the large muscles of the arm and shoulder, in contradistinction to the writing movement made almost exclusively by the action of the fingers. Other names, such as Arm Movement and Forearm Movement, are applied to it by some educationists. But whether it be called by one name or another, exactly the same kind of movement is meant; so there need be no discussion over the name that is applied to it.

In muscular-movement writing the fingers have no real function other than that of holding the pen. They remain inactive, or nearly so. The hand rests on the nails

of the third and fourth fingers, and the arm rests on the muscular cushion just below the elbow. The motive power is furnished by the large muscles of the upper part of the arm and shoulder. By simply moving the arm backward and forward on the muscular cushion, allowing the hand to slide on the finger nails, all the movement needed in making rapid, legible writing is produced, with the possible exception of a slight finger action necessary to make graceful loop letters. Some advocates of muscular movement consider even this amount of finger movement as quite unnecessary, even detrimental to the creation of the proper writing movement. The difference between the two systems is so small that no teacher need have any scruples in adopting either one. If the work is done by the pupils as it should be done, excellent results will follow in either case.

Importance of Initial Steps

The initial steps in the formation of a correct writing movement should not be gone over rapidly. They are the very foundation of the pupil's progress. To pass over any part of them carelessly or indifferently is an indication that the teacher does not realize that every good structure requires a firm foundation. Every detail is important. Every step plays its part in building up a style of writing that will not break down under the pressure that later years will put on it. Therefore it is wise to spend plenty of time on these preliminary steps.

Be sure that the pupils have mastered each step before proceeding to the next. Impress upon them the value of acquiring muscular-movement writing. Show them the futility of having two writing movements, one for the writing lesson and one for ordinary writing. Show them

that no permanent progress can result when such a condition is persisted in.

Should some of the pupils find it difficult to get the correct movement (and there will be some), the best plan to pursue is to make a special class for them, in which additional instruction will be given suitable to their individual needs. Very little improvement can be expected from teaching where part of the class is incapable of doing the work through not having mastered the steps upon which the instruction is based.

Factors in the Development of Muscular Movement

In the creation of a correct writing movement there are certain factors that play an important part. These will now be taken up in detail, so that the teacher may have a proper understanding of the part each bears in the production of correct habits of writing among the pupils.

MATERIALS

"A workman is known by the tools he uses." A good workman is satisfied only with the best tools that he can buy, while a poor workman is content with any kind. Always use the best writing materials you can buy. Much valuable time and energy are wasted by using poor pens, holders, ink, and paper. A pen with a medium point is best, one that is neither too coarse nor too fine. Any good black or blue fluid ink will do, provided that it flows freely from the pen. Every pupil should have a cotton or chamois penwiper, to use while he is writing and to wipe the pen carefully upon before putting it aside. A new pen requires to have the varnish rubbed off, before the ink will adhere properly. The best way to do this is to dip the pen in the ink, and then rub it carefully on the

edge of a piece of scribbling paper folded several times. The holder should be of medium size, with a cork or rubber grip. Pupils should not be allowed to use a holder with a metal tip, as it has to be held tightly in order to keep it from turning in the fingers. This will cause a nervous tension that will be very detrimental to the development of the writing movement.

POSTURE

When it is considered that the major portion of each school day is spent by the pupils in doing some kind of work at the desk, the importance of creating a writing posture that will conform to the laws of health is quite evident. Before entering, however, upon a detailed discussion of the requirements of a good posture, a word of warning should be sounded, in order to prevent too rigid an application of the principles laid down. Especially is this true in the case of young pupils. Perhaps the danger is in the opposite direction; but it is well to know that when we allow an occasional lapse from the ideal position, we are not compromising with our principles, but are applying another one equally valid; that is, it is not ideal to expect a pupil to maintain any position, except one of relaxation, for any considerable length of time.

In order that the pupils may learn the principles of a good posture with the least expenditure of time and energy, it is essential that the reasons for adopting each requirement be explained to them thoroughly. Merely telling them how to sit is not teaching a correct posture. A teacher has not taught posture until the pupils assume a correct posture automatically when commencing to write, and maintain this position, not only during the writing lesson, but during all their written work in all the classes.

Pupils sometimes assume incorrect positions quite unconsciously. This is usually due to some physical defect, such as a weakness in certain muscles. The best way to counteract this tendency is to strengthen these muscles by systematic, daily exercise. A thorough understanding by the pupils of the beneficial effects of a good posture on the writing movement and general health conditions, and of the harmful influences of a poor posture, will furnish the necessary incentives to overcome the tendency to assume the latter. Constant vigilance in the form of frequent reminders will prevent occasional lapses. These reminders should consist of short phrases that will fix the mind of the pupils on the special requirements of posture that they have momentarily neglected.

The first requirement of a good posture is that the body and the head be held erect. If the back is too rounded, the lungs, the stomach, etc., will be correspondingly compressed, and this will interfere greatly with the proper working of the organs of respiration and digestion necessary to the creation and maintenance of good health.

The second requirement is that the pupil should sit squarely on the seat. In this connection it is well to point out the effect that the seat may have on a good posture. If the seat is too low, the elbows will be too far from the body. This causes a waste of energy. If the seat is too high, the pupil will lean too far forward. This will result in the unhealthy conditions referred to in the previous paragraph. Care must be taken to see that the seat and desk are adjusted to suit the pupil, otherwise he will adjust himself to suit them.

A third requirement is that the feet should be flat on the floor. It is not necessary that they be kept close together, but only in such a position as to create a perfect

balance. An ill-balanced position causes a continual and unnecessary muscular tension, resulting in a serious loss of nervous energy. The two most common habits that teachers will need to warn against are: (1) Extending the legs forward under the desk with the heels on the floor, and (2) bending the legs back under the seat with the toes on the floor. The latter position is the one assumed usually by the nervous, over-anxious pupils, and the former by the careless and indolent ones.

It is well to remember that a poor posture may sometimes arise from defective eyesight. If such is the case, a remedy may be found by removing the pupil to another part of the room where the light may come from a different angle, and thus be diffused differently on the paper. Should the defect, however, be more deep-seated, the only remedy is the use of glasses.

The next requirement of correct posture is that the pupil must face the desk squarely. Both forearms should rest on the desk, with the elbows projecting over the edge equally, and at an equal distance from the sides. In this position the trunk will be erect, and the spinal column will not be curved. Sometimes a pupil develops a habit of turning his head to one side. The reason is that he is either holding his pen incorrectly or the paper is improperly placed on the desk. In either case it is a simple matter to correct the fault.

(See cuts illustrating correct position, both side and front views, on pages 5 and 6 of the *Ontario Writing Courses.*)

PEN-HOLDING

The next factor to be considered in the development of muscular movement is pen-holding. The recognized manner of holding the pen is to place the holder in such

a position that it crosses the second finger somewhere between the root of the nail and the first joint. The first finger is placed on top of the pen-holder about one inch from the end of the pen point. The distance will vary according to the shape of the hand. Short fingers will necessarily be placed nearer the end than long fingers. The holder comes in contact with the hand somewhere *below* the knuckle joint. Here again the position will vary according to the shape of the hand. The shorter and fatter the fingers, the lower the holder will drop below the knuckle, until with some it will seem to be resting almost at the base of the thumb. The thumb is placed at the side of (not underneath) the holder about one third to two thirds of an inch from the end of the first finger. All the fingers should be bent easily, each one, from the first to the little one, being bent slightly more than the one before it. In this way they support one another. If the hand is made to slide on the nails of the last two fingers, the holder will naturally point somewhere between the elbow and the shoulder. (See page 4, *Ontario Writing Courses.*)

POSITION OF THE HAND

Closely associated with the manner of holding the pen is the position of the hand. Indeed all the elements of movement, posture, and position are closely interrelated, a fact which must be kept in mind to enable us to understand some of the principles laid down for our guidance. With reference to the position of the hand, the question of most importance is, whether it should be held so that the wrist is flat, or so that the side of the hand rests on the paper, or whether it should occupy a position somewhere between the two. In the second case the free up

and down and lateral movements of the hand are greatly restricted, because the side of the hand does not provide such a polished surface on which to glide as do the nails. The tendency is for the hand to remain stationary, while the fingers not only form the letters but also produce the lateral movement required in moving along the line. In the case of the level, or flat wrist, it is now generally recognized as too extreme and unnatural a position, but it was, no doubt, an extreme measure adopted by the first teachers of muscular movement to counteract the more serious defect of turning the hand on the side. The position of the hand now generally accepted as correct is one in which the wrist does not touch the paper, where the hand rests on the nails of the third and fourth fingers, and the wrist slants slightly toward the right, permitting the holder to point somewhere between the shoulder and the elbow. (See page 4, *Ontario Writing Courses.*)

POSITION OF THE ARM

The arm should rest on the desk with the elbow off about one inch. The muscular cushion thus forms a firm support for the arm and acts as a sort of rolling base upon which practically all the movement of the arm is executed. Should the elbow not project over the edge of the desk, imperfections will appear in most of the down strokes, especially the long ones, owing to the point of the elbow coming in contact with the desk. If the elbow projects too far over the edge, the weight of the arm is divided between the hand and the shoulder, and a sort of teetering motion is created.

Equally important is the position of the left hand and arm. Generally they should be placed in a position symmetrical with that of the right, in order to preserve

the equal elevation of the shoulders, thus preventing curvature of the spinal column. The left hand should be *above* the line of writing. In such a position it performs two important functions: (1) It holds the paper firmly in position, and (2) it supports the body. Under this condition the right hand is free to move easily in any direction, while the body is held steady by the left hand and arm.

COUNTING AND RHYTHM

Another important factor in the development of a proper writing movement is counting. Successful experiments have shown that one of the chief differences between the writing of an adult and the writing of a child is that the former usually has acquired the habit of writing rhythmically. That is, certain strokes seem to be made at regularly recurring intervals. The writing of a child usually lacks this rhythm. However, it has also been shown that having a child write to a certain time or music will have a tendency to unify his writing, creating a certain regularity or evenness in it.

The advantage of using rhythm is well illustrated in its general effect on all kinds of muscular effort. Soldiers marching to music, club swinging, dancing, etc., are good examples. All muscular activities, especially new ones, are marked by a certain degree of nervousness or hesitation, which is best overcome by performing the act in concert in accordance with given signals. In addition to the effect of rhythm on the nervous tension, it helps to regulate the movement and to bring it more under control. Its influence on certain kinds of pupils is almost inestimable. The slow, stolid, phlegmatic pupils are made to go faster, while the nervous, excitable ones are calmed.

The result is that all work together steadily and evenly at a speed that will produce good writing.

Rhythm in writing is usually developed by tapping with a ruler or a pencil, by the use of a metronome, or by music (piano or phonograph). However, the best method is counting. No mechanical device can take the place of the human voice. It acts as a fountain of inspiration. The laggards are roused and the excitable are calmed. At the same time that the teacher is indicating the correct count, errors of posture, pen-holding, etc., may be corrected by the use of certain words or phrases uttered with the proper rhythm. Should some pupils be holding their pens too tightly while making a retraced oval, the fault may be corrected by counting after this manner: *1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - relax - relax - relax - relax - relax.* The same amount of time must be given to "relax" as to "one", "two", etc. Counting is also an invaluable aid in arousing the interest of the class and increasing the speed of the writing.

In order that counting may be done effectively, it must be done intelligently. A few trials should enable the teacher who has already practised the exercise to indicate the correct count for the class. One point to be borne in mind always is that counting must not be done in a boisterous, irritating way. To do so would defeat the aim of the teacher, particularly in the case of nervous pupils.

IX. POSITION OF THE PAPER

In determining the correct position of the paper there are two general features that must be taken into consideration. The first one is that the paper and the arm must be in such a relative position that the rotation of the

forearm, using the elbow as a pivot, will carry the hand along the line of writing. Naturally, then, the paper must be tilted toward the left until the forearm and the line of writing are about at right angles. The second point is that the most natural direction of the down strokes is toward the middle of the body, or parallel with the sides of the desk. That is, the pen in making down strokes will move along the "line of vision" or parallel with it. (See page 6, *Ontario Writing Courses.*) In consequence of this the direction, or slant, of the writing will deviate from the vertical by the same angle as the paper is tilted. Should some pupils write either too vertically or too slantingly, the fault can usually be overcome by moving the top of the paper toward either the right or the left, as required.

Another point of importance to be remembered is that there is one particular location on the paper where the pupil can do his best work. It is essential that we take advantage of this fact, so that we may make the acquisition of the correct writing movement as easy as possible. Experiment has proved that this location is generally about the middle of the page, apparently because at this place the edge of the book does not interfere with the wrist. The reason the leaves of the *Ontario Blank Writing Books* are perforated is that they may be torn out, in order to take advantage of this ideal place on the paper. The top line should be placed about half-way down on the book, and gradually moved up, line by line, until the pupil, when writing on the last line, will be writing at the same height, relatively to the book, as when he began. Should the pupil find it difficult to write all the way across the line, the paper should be moved once or twice to the left in writing across the page.

It is not to be expected that all pupils will hold the paper exactly as illustrated on page 6 of the *Ontario Writing Courses*. In order to find out the exact position for all pupils, it is a good plan to have them test the position before commencing to write by having them swing a dry pen back and forth from one end of the line to the other. Should the pen swing above or below the line in moving to the right, the top corner of the paper should be moved toward either the left or the right.

X. MOVEMENT EXERCISES

Movement exercises usually consist in the repetition of certain formal drills, such as the straight line, ovals, or modifications of these. The purpose of these drills is to give practice in maintaining correct posture, developing a proper writing movement, and applying the movement to the production of formal writing. When a pupil is making actual letters, his attention is largely taken up with the result he wishes to attain, and in consequence he is likely to neglect the process by which he attains it. In other words, he thinks too much about the *what,* rather than the *how.* The emphasis of present-day teaching is placed on the process rather than upon the result divorced from the process.

A word of warning might not be out of place here. Some teachers seem to have the idea that if they have taught pupils to make good movement exercises, they have taught writing successfully. But they forget that these exercises are but a means to an end. That end is the production of rapid, legible writing with a free, easy movement. Consequently, pupils must be taught how to apply this movement to the formation of letters and words.

There are two kinds of movement exercises: (1) General—a purely formal drill such as the straight line and ovals, pages 7, 8, and 9, *Ontario Writing Courses*; (2) specific—one used in connection with the actual production of letters, pages 11, 12, and 14, Book I, *Ontario Writing Courses*. Practice on a general-movement drill similar in shape or direction should be preliminary to every writing lesson.

XI. A SYSTEM OF SIGNALS

With young pupils especially it is advisable to have the work done according to some system. The following plan is merely a suggestion; many teachers will be able to devise a better one.

1. Opening—(*a*) Distribution of books by monitors.
   (*b*) Open books.
   (*c*) Detach sheet.
   (*d*) Attention (arms hanging loosely by the side; Illustration 1, page 2).
   (*e*) Arms raised; (Illustration 2, page 2).
   (*f*) Take pencils (or pens).
   (*g*) Arms in position.

2. Closing—Similar plan for closing.

XII. WRITING FOR YOUNG PUPILS

Experiments have clearly demonstrated that the child is greatly deficient, as compared with the adult, in precision of movement, steadiness of movement, and speed of movement. This fact has an important bearing on the teaching of writing to junior pupils. The adult should never

forget that, while a movement to him may be rough and careless, to the child it is precise and careful. To the adult there is a certain strain of attention and fatigue due to the making of new adjustments even in such large movements as in learning to ride a bicycle or to skate. How much greater, then, must be the strain of attention and fatigue to a child who is learning to write, an act that is not only new to him but also one that requires a high degree of precision.

Every means that will minimize the nervous strain on the child should be utilized. The writing lesson for pupils in the lower grades should come at a time when the nerves are calm, and before they are fatigued. A pen should not be used at all to begin with. The first pen-holder used should have a cork or rubber grip, and be slightly smaller than the one to be used later. The pencil should not be too hard or too soft; an HB will probably be more suitable than any other. It should have a medium sharp point.

BLACK-BOARD PRACTICE

A child is incapable of making precise movements. Now it is quite evident that a large letter can be made with much less precision of movement than a small one. The deviation from the true form of the letter will bear a much smaller proportion to the whole. That is the reason why it is easier to write in good form on the black-board than upon paper. Moreover, black-board writing is done solely with whole arm movement. All the fingers do is to hold the chalk.

Since the aim is to teach pupils to write without using the fingers, this fact obviously should be taken advantage of to the fullest extent. Accordingly, the pupils in the lowest grade should do about one half their practice on

the black-board. After about four weeks, practice should be done on paper, but short, daily board practice should be continued wherever possible until Parts I and II of Book I, *Ontario Writing Courses,* are completed. Indeed, it may be used with beneficial effects throughout the whole school course. Board practice overcomes timidity, assists nature in developing and controlling the larger muscles of the arm and body, and gives facility in handling the chalk; thus making the teachers-to-be more skilled in black-board writing.

The horizontal lines used in the larger movement exercises, also for all the loop letters and capitals, should be at least four inches apart. The minimum letters should be at least two inches in height. The slant should be similar to that of the writing done on paper, while the speed, of necessity, should be considerably less.

PRACTICE ON PAPER

Size of writing:

In consideration of what has already been said with respect to the precision of children's movements, it is reasonable to expect that the writing on paper should be larger for junior pupils than for advanced ones. For the Primary Grades the minimum letters should be at least one fourth of an inch in height, and the capitals and loop letters should be half an inch. This will allow for the diffusion of the nervous impulse and make for the necessary flexibility of movement.

Speed:

As the accuracy demanded is less exact than that required of older pupils, so also should the speed be less rapid. The movement should be slow enough to permit

the eye to guide it, and it should be fast enough to allow of no stops or breaks in it. If the movement is not continuous, there can be no improvement in the ability to make a form of which the picture is already in the mind.

More definite instruction will be given later as to the speed at which the various exercises, letters, etc., are to be written by the different classes.

XIII. PRIMARY GRADE WRITING

During the first four weeks of school, as stated before, the pupils should do all their actual writing practice at the black-board. In the meantime they should be learning the fundamental steps in the development of muscular movement at the desk, utilizing probably one half the time of the writing lesson in board practice and one half in desk practice.

STEP ONE

The first thing the pupils should be taught is how to sit at the desk. Their attention should be drawn to Illustration 1, page 2, *Ontario Writing Courses.* When they can assume the correct position readily, have them raise both arms above the desk (Illustration 2, page 2), and place them on the desk in proper writing position (Illustration 1, page 6). Considerable drill must be devoted to this part of the work, in order to enable the pupils to assume the position promptly. Next, they should be required to open the right hand until the fingers are extended and the hand, palm downward, rests upon the desk. Then the right hand, not the elbow, should be raised slightly above the desk (Illustration 1, page 3). The two arms should now be in the same position relative to the desk as in Illustration 2, page 6.

Keeping the hands in this position, the pupils should be shown how to give the right arm a push forward on the muscular cushion on an imaginary line (line of vision) straight out from the middle of the body. Then have them pull the arm back along this same line. The teacher should then count after the following manner, and the pupils and teacher should go through the operation: *push, pull, push, pull,* until they have completed ten up strokes and ten down strokes. Afterward the teacher may count: *up-down-up-down,* etc., for a similar number. Later on the count may be: *1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10.* The rate of speed for these movements should be about one hundred down strokes in a minute.

About one week should be devoted to the part of the work taken up thus far, in order that all the pupils may be able to do it easily and promptly.

STEP TWO

The next step is to place a sheet of ruled paper on the desk for the nails to slide on. Then the fingers should be bent under, as in Illustration 2, page 3. The operation of pushing and pulling should now be repeated, but this time the right hand should slide on the finger nails. The counting process, at the same rate of speed, should be continued by the teacher.

The points to be impressed on the pupils are: (1) The wrist should not touch the paper, and (2) the arm should not slip on the muscular cushion.

As soon as the pupils understand how to avoid these tendencies, they should be drilled in making the hand move up and down the width of a space on their paper (one half-inch). About one week should be given to drill on this Step and the review of Step One.

STEP THREE

Up to this time the pupils have been practising without a pencil. Now they should be taught how to hold the pencil (Illustration 1, page 4). Of course, as soon as a pupil finds a pencil in his hand he immediately wants to write. Therefore for the present the pencil should be held with the point upward. Systematic daily practice must be given to pushing and pulling the pencil up and down the width of a space, as was done in Steps One and Two. At the end of another week the pupil should be quite capable of holding the pencil as in Illustration 2, page 4.

STEP FOUR

This brings us to making the exercises on the paper with the pencil. Here the teacher will have to explain the correct position of the paper (Illustration 2, page 6). Nothing need be said to junior pupils about slant, but the teacher should explain that the natural direction of the strokes will be along the line of vision.

At the commencement of every lesson a trial should always be made to see if the paper is in the right position. This trial method is explained on page 19.

By the time the pupil has arrived at this point in his paper practice, he should be able to do the exercises on pages 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 fairly well on the board. He has thus become familiar with the general shape of the exercises and letters by the direct process of motor activity, before undertaking the more difficult activity of producing them with a pencil on paper. Blackboard practice should always precede paper practice.

INCIDENTAL WRITING

From what has been said regarding pupils doing unsupervised writing, many teachers will naturally desire to know what provision can be made for "Incidental Writing". That is, how best can junior pupils be taught to read when it is generally known that the motor activity in reproducing the words is an aid to the recognition of the words themselves. To a large extent this work must necessarily be unsupervised; and in order to conform as nearly as possible to the principles already laid down for the creation of a proper writing movement and proper writing habits, it is essential that the work be done in such a way that the pupils will not revert to improper postures and finger movement. Considering this, it would not be wise to allow junior pupils to do their *written reading* and *number work* in the accustomed way. Instead of using paper or slates, they should be required to do this work on the black-board or on large sheets of wide-ruled paper, so that the writing may be large, thus necessitating the use of muscular movement in its production.

XIV. DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FOR EACH PLATE

Page 7

The pupils will readily recognize these forms as the first movements they practised—the *push* and *pull* exercise. The special features to be noted are (1) direction, (2) lightness, (3) compactness. The teacher should count *up-down-up-down,* etc., until eighty is reached—the number of down strokes in each section in line 1. By the aid of a stop-watch or metronome the exact count can be accurately gauged. The speed may be gradually increased until the pupils can make one hundred down strokes in a

minute. Should they experience any difficulty in making the strokes toward the middle of the body, a few light pencil lines drawn on the paper parallel with the line of vision will prove helpful in correcting the fault.

At this stage there may also be a tendency to press too heavily on the pencil, a tendency due to nervousness, timidity, or some other cause. This fault can be overcome quite easily by saying: *light-light-light* instead of the usual *1-2-3*. Naturally, the same measure or beat should be used in both cases.

Another fault, that of holding the pencil too tightly, sometimes called "gripping" or "pinching", may be corrected by repeating *don't-pinch-don't-pinch,* to the same rhythm as in saying *1-2-3-4*.

There is one special feature in the teaching that must be emphasized at this time. It is to be clearly understood that the teacher must write all the copies on the board and as many as possible on paper, so that the pupils may see the teacher go through the actual process of making the forms, thus impressing more vividly upon their minds the motions and the speed at which the forms should be written.

PAGE 8

This is a compact left oval. In order that the pupils may understand the direction of the motion used in making this exercise, it is a good plan to say at first: *round-round-round,* and so on, instead of the usual *1-2-3-4,* etc. Care must be exercised to see that the pupils are observing the requirements of posture and of the position of the paper.

The paper should be moved toward the left for each group in lines 1 and 2, and at least once for line 3. The

points to be emphasized in connection with the ovals are: lightness, compactness, proper width, and correct slant. Some of these drills should be practised every day.

PAGE 9

The same remarks that were applied to the left ovals on page 8 are applicable to the right ovals on page 9.

PAGE 10

Large movement exercises are for the purpose of developing the correct movement, and the smaller exercises are to gain control over the movement. Extra precautions must be taken, or the pupils will resort to finger movement in making these shorter strokes. A slightly faster count may be used for these exercises, owing to the shorter distance to travel.

CAUTION—Only vigilance will prevent too frequent lapses in the matter of correct posture, pencil holding, and position of the paper.

PAGE 11

This is a modification of the left oval. In making this exercise the teacher should say what the pupils must think in doing it. Therefore the count should be: *up-round-up-round-up-round-up-round-up-round-up-round-up.* Later on the usual *1-2-3* may be substituted. An excellent plan is to have the pupils retrace the exercises about five times, both on the board and on the paper.

CAUTION—See that the wrist is not touching the paper, also that the pencil is in motion before coming in contact with the paper.

PAGE 12

A modification of the left oval and straight-line exercise. Count: *up-down-up-down,* and so on. See that the down strokes are slanting properly, and that the paper is moved for each group.

PAGE 13

The special points to be noticed in the *s* are the retraced parts at the top and the rounded part which should touch the up, or initial, stroke. The count for a group of four letters should be: *up-back, up-back, up-back, up-back, up,* pausing slightly at the commas. The count for *See* should be: *up-back, up-round, up-round.*

CAUTION—See that the pupils do not hold the pencil too tightly, or the strokes will be both irregular and heavy.

PAGE 14

A modification of the right oval and straight line. The count should be: *up-over, up-over,* etc. In order that all the pupils may do the exercises at the same speed, it is advisable sometimes to have one of them count, and occasionally to allow the whole class to count. This will add interest, and may be the means of enabling some pupil with comparatively little understanding of rhythm to do the work evenly and regularly, instead of jerkily and spasmodically.

PAGE 15

This is a combination of the exercise on page 14 and that on page 11. If the pupils have had a thorough drill on these two exercises, they should experience no difficulty in combining them into the word *me.* The count should

be: *up-over-up-over-up-over-up-round-up.* Constant practice on the black-board and on paper should enable the pupils, by gradually increasing the rate of counting, to make sixteen or more words in a minute. At this point the teacher should endeavour to cultivate the habit of self-criticism in the pupils, by having them compare their work with the copy.

Caution—Unless the requirements of posture, etc., are being met, the much desired writing movement will not be attained.

Page 16

Preliminary practice on the left oval, page 8, should precede the practice on the capital *O.* Have the pupils point out the important features—the roundness, the small loop at the top, the upward curve of the last stroke. The count of this letter should be: *big-round-O,* which not only indicates the shape, but also the time required to make it. It would be well to retrace the letters and afterwards make them separately. Practice on the *O* should add greatly to the enthusiasm of the pupils for the work.

Page 17

This is the first sentence for practice. It would be well to review each word separately, counting as already indicated for each one. Afterwards write the sentence as a whole, either moving the paper for the last half of the line, or making two columns. Indicate the count carefully for each part, and increase it gradually as the pupils become accustomed to the direction of the strokes.

Page 18

The *n* will present no special difficulty, since the pupils are already familiar with the movement from practising

the exercise on page 14, also from writing the word *me*. *Up-over-up-over-up-over-up-over* is the count when making the *n* in groups of four.

In writing the word *men* care must be taken to indicate the strokes the pupils are expected to make. Count thus: *up-over-up-over-up-over-up-round-up-over-up-over-up*. When the pupils can make the word with some degree of ease, the count may be changed to *1-2-3-4-5-6*, the numbers being pronounced slowly enough for the pupils to make an up and down stroke to each number.

CAUTION—Remember that *how* the pupils are doing these exercises is much more important than *what* they are doing.

PAGE 19

The letter *i* is quite similar to the *e* except that the latter has a loop in it and the former is pointed at the top. The motions used in making them are alike, but care must be taken to retrace the up stroke about one third of the way.

The word *in* gives practice in changing from the *under* motion in the *i* to the *over* motion in the *n*. At first the count should be: *up-down-up-over-up-over-up*. Later it may be changed to *1-2-3-4*, counting for the up or the down strokes. When the pupils have acquired some facility in making it, the teacher may spell the word *i-n* at the rate they have been writing it.

Pupils learn to use muscular movement well by constant practice on words and exercises they know, rather than by frequent changes to new and unfamiliar ones.

PAGE 20

As a preliminary drill before making the *u* in groups of three, practise the exercise on page 12.

The teacher should name the motions: *up-down-up-down-up-down-up-down*, and so on. Endeavour to have more space *between* the letters than *in* the letters. The word *sun* constitutes a review of the *s*, *u*, and *n*. It should be retraced on the board, as suggested before, so that the pupils may become accustomed to the changes of motion that occur in writing it. Sixteen to eighteen words a minute would be a good rate of speed.

PAGE 21

The *r* is much like an *i* except for the shoulder, the part that makes this letter difficult to make. Count: *up-fall-down*. This constitutes about the exact description of the movement. After reaching the top, the pencil takes a sort of tumble, then recovers itself and comes down straight. Groups of three or four *r's* should be made. For the word *run* spell the letters, and increase the speed until about sixteen words a minute are being made. Supplementary words for practice: rise, ruin.

PAGE 22

Another short sentence for a review, enabling the pupils to consolidate the movement without having to resort to a great deal of mental effort. That is, they will be able to pay more attention to the mechanical part of the work—the movement. It would be well to name the strokes for each word at first; later on the letters may be spelled at the rate at which the pupils are expected to make them. Endeavour to secure neatness by means of arrangement and spacing of the letters and words.

CAUTION—See that the pupils assume a correct hygienic posture.

PAGE 23

The motions used in making the small *o* should be explained *by the teacher* to the pupils. The special features are the roundness and the reversed motion used in completing it. The count used in describing the motion should be: *round-o-swing.* The connecting, or swing, stroke between the *o's* should not be made too short, thus giving as much freedom as possible. Make about sixteen groups in a minute.

CAUTION—Endeavour to establish the habit of self-criticism, by frequent comparisons with the copy.

PAGE 24

The motions needed to make the word *on* should present no great difficulty, if the pupils have succeeded in making the top joinings in the preceding lesson with any degree of ease. Describe the motions after this manner: *round-o-swing-over-over-up.* Afterwards name the letters.

CAUTION—It is necessary to watch for all infractions of the rules of posture, etc. If the pupils are not using pure muscular movement in these exercises, the writing movement is not being properly developed, and the teacher is only laying up trouble for the future. Supplementary words: no, one.

PAGE 25

This lesson is to provide additional practice in the top joining and in changing from one motion to another. Name the motions by saying: *swing-s, up-round-over-over-up,* pausing slightly at the comma, so that the stroke of the *s* may be retraced. In order that the pupils may have the motions firmly fixed in their minds, it is a good

plan to retrace the words many times. Another method that gives excellent results is to make the word with the blunt end of the pencil. As no strokes are being made on the paper, the pupils can concentrate their minds on the character of the movement rather than on the result of the movement.

PAGE 26

The word *nine* furnishes a valuable drill in changing from the *over* motion to the *under* motion and back again. At first, the motions should be named, as: *over-over,* etc., but later on the letters may be spelled, or *1-2-3-4-5-6* may be substituted, a count for each down stroke. This exercise ought to be practised frequently both at the board and at the desk. A speed of sixteen or more words a minute is sufficient.

PAGE 27

There is some resemblance between the *A* and the *O*. In making the *A*, the first stroke is *round,* but as soon as we reach the base line, instead of continuing the round motion we make an *up* stroke which connects with the starting-point. The last stroke *drops* down through the base line. Before the pupil can make these strokes he must think them, so the teacher should count: *round-up-drop.* At first the letter should be made with the blunt end of the pencil. When the pupils can write the *A* with ease and freedom, using the *dry* movement, then reverse the pencil. About thirty to forty *A's* a minute constitute a good rate of speed.

CAUTION—There can be no development of a good writing movement unless the pupils sit in a correct position.

PAGE 28

The capital *A* and the small *a* are so much alike that naturally they should follow each other. The main difference lies in the size and the finishing stroke. The motions used in writing *a* are: *round-up-under*. The pupils should practise the letter in groups of three or four, naming the motions as they write. Afterwards it will be sufficient to say *a-a-a-a*. In making *an* count *round-up-under-over-over*.

CAUTION—Remember to retrace the letters and to practise with the *dry* (pencil inverted) movement frequently.

PAGE 29

This lesson constitutes a review, in order that the pupils may gain more freedom, movement, and speed. At first the motions should be named: *over-over-over-up-round-under-over-over*. Later on, counting for the down strokes will be all that is necessary. Care must be exercised to allow sufficient time for *m* when the letters are named. It has three down strokes, while *a* and *n* have only two each.

CAUTION—Be sure the tops of the *m's* and *n's* are being rounded. If they are being made too sharp, show the pupils how to get more *roundness* in the *over* strokes.

PAGE 30

The chief characteristic in the *c* is the small dot at the beginning. Otherwise it is made like *o*. Considerable time should be given to black-board and *dry*-movement practice on this letter. The motions may be described by saying *dot-round*. In joining the *c* to *an* name the motions thus: *dot-round-over-round-under-over-over*. As

soon as the pupils can write the word easily to this count, change the count to *c-a-n* or *1-2-3*. However, as the pupils have had considerable practice in writing *an*, it should be enough to name the letters and indicate the motions used in making *c*, thus: *dot-round-over-a-n*. About sixteen words a minute should constitute a maximum speed.

PAGE 31

Much improvement should result from practising this sentence, on all the words of which the pupils have already been drilled. Notice how the words are arranged in columns. By arranging the words thus the pupils will gain both in neatness and in control over the writing movement.

CAUTION—Be sure the pupils always have a well-sharpened pencil ready for the writing lesson.

PAGE 32

The first part of *x* is made like the last part of *n*. The cross stroke should be made *upward*, otherwise the pupils will be making a down stroke on a slant entirely different from the slant of any other down stroke. The direction of this stroke is similar to that of the ordinary connective, or up, strokes. It crosses at the middle point of the down stroke. Considerable practice should be given on the single *x*, before writing it in groups of three. The cross strokes are added after the first part of the three letters have been written. The count for *x* is *over-under, cross*. In writing *mix*, count for the down strokes: *1-2-3-4-5, 6*, pausing slightly after *5*, in order to make the cross stroke properly. Later, it should be enough to name the letters, keeping in mind that the *i* requires much less time than either *m* or *x*.

PAGE 33

The *v* is a combination of the strokes found in *n, u,* and *o.* The motions used in making it may be described thus: *over-under, swing.* A slight pause should be made before making the final, or *swing,* stroke. Endeavour to have each pupil possess a good mental picture of the letter before commencing to practise it. Black-board and dry-movement practice should be done on the *v,* both singly and in groups, before trying it with a pencil. The word *vine* will present no difficulty, as the pupils have already written the word *nine.* The count for *vine* may be given in this way: *over-under, swing-i-n-e.* From twelve to fifteen words a minute should constitute a good rate of speed.

PAGE 34

The pupils will have no trouble in finding the points of similarity between the *w,* the *u,* and the *v.* The motion may be described as follows: *up-under-under, swing,* with a slight pause at the comma. The count to designate the motion used in writing the word is: *up-under-under, swing-i-s.* Supplementary words: now, wine.

CAUTION—Only by continuous movement can strong, smooth lines be made. Therefore, do not allow breaks in the movement.

PAGE 35

In practising the sentence give a short preliminary drill on the separate words. Try to have the pupils keep the words in alignment. The ending strokes should be no higher than the minimum letters. By exercising care in these two particulars the page will present a neat and orderly appearance.

CAUTION—Slow writing is productive of accuracy of form at the expense of movement.

PAGE 36

The letter in this lesson is much like the *i*, only taller. The cross stroke cuts the main stroke about one quarter of the distance down. The retraced portion is about one half the length of the whole letter. Describe the motion used in making the *t* by saying: *up-under, cross,* pausing slightly at the comma. The pupils should be already familiar with the final combination in *tin*. Count: *up-under, i-n-cross-dot.*

CAUTION—See that no finger movement is used in making the *t*.

PAGE 37

Whenever it is possible, the pupils should be asked to point out resemblances between the new letter to be practised and those they have already learned. A great deal of enthusiasm can be aroused in this way. The first part of *d* is like *a,* and the last part is like *t*. The motion should be described by saying: *round-up-under*. For the word *done,* count for *d* in the usual way, then add *o, n, e*. Considerable practice at the board and with the unsharpened end of the pencil will be necessary, so that the pupils will acquire the necessary confidence to make these large forms with ease and skill. Encouragement should be given for effort as well as for achievement.

CAUTION—A little praise, judiciously given, is of great help to those who find the work hard. Praise is often the only incentive that will keep pupils persevering during those periods when progress is slow.

PAGE 38

The upper part of the *p* is like *t*. The bottom part is a lower, or *down,* loop. These two parts should be of equal length. The last part of the letter is not unlike an *a*

upside down. The motion used in making the *p* may be described as follows: *up-down-loop-oval-up.* The letter should be practised both singly and in groups of threes on the board, and with the dry movement. It is a long letter, much longer than any the pupils have had heretofore. In writing the word *pen* the count should be: *up-down-loop-oval-e-n.* Later on, naming the letters will be quite sufficient.

PAGE 39

The main point of difference between the capital *S* and the small *s* is that the top of the latter is pointed, while the top of the former is a loop. The same motion is used in making both, but in the case of the capital, the up stroke is made twice as long as in the small *s.* The motion may be described as follows: *up-loop-back.* After considerable drill on the letter, the pupils should practise the word, describing the motion thus: *up-loop-back-a-m.*

PAGE 40

As soon as the pupils reach this lesson, it should no longer be necessary to name the motions used in making those letters that they already know. Spelling the word should be enough. Apply this method to the sentence on this page. Aim at a neat, orderly arrangement.

PAGE 41

The upper part of *j* is like *i,* and the bottom part is a lower loop similar to that in *p,* except that it is longer and wider. The count should be: *up-down-loop, dot.* When writing *jam,* name the motions for *j* and add *a, m, dot.*

CAUTION—Keep in mind that the development of a proper writing movement is the object of these lessons in writing.

PAGE 42

This lesson introduces another letter which belongs to the group of small letters that have a lower loop as the distinguishing characteristic. The first part of *g* is like *a*. The motion used in making the letter should be named thus: *round-down-loop*. It would be well to spend considerable time in black-board and dry-movement practice before attempting this letter on paper. The count for the word is: *round-down-loop-u-m*.

CAUTION—Remember to have frequent comparisons between the pupils' work and the copy.

PAGE 43

The pupils should be able to pick out the points of similarity between the *y*, the *j*, and the *n*. The count is *over-under, loop,* with a slight pause at the comma. There is a rather difficult joining between the *m* and the *y* in *my*. Spend some time on black-board and dry-movement drill on this combination. In writing it on paper, naming the letters will be sufficient.

PAGE 44

This lesson introduces a new feature—the upper, or *up,* loop. If the loop were made the same height as the minimum spaced letters, it would be exactly like the *e*. But as it is twice as high, more time will be needed in making it, and a different count will also be necessary. Possibly the best way of describing the motion is to say: *up-loop-under*. In all probability it would be advisable not to tell the junior pupils about using their fingers in making either the lower or upper loops. That had better be left until they reach the Third or the Fourth Class. By so doing, no excuse will be given for the use of any finger

movement during such a formative stage of the pupils' development. For the word *line* count: *up-loop-under-i-n-e.* About twelve words a minute is a good rate of speed.

PAGE 45

The *h* is merely an upper loop with the last part of *m* or *n* attached. Describe the motion by saying: *up-loop, over,* pausing slightly at the comma. Considerable blackboard and dry-movement practice should be done on these loops. This kind of practice gives the pupils facility in making the motions without wanting to use the fingers. Consequently, they acquire more skill and more confidence. The count for *has* is: *up-loop-over-a-s.*

PAGE 46

The distinguishing feature between an *h* and a *k* is the round hook on the second part of the latter. Interest can be aroused by having the pupils point out what they consider the distinguishing feature, also by having them describe the motions used in making the different letters. The count for *k* should be: *up-loop-over-round-under.* For the word *lake* the best count is merely to spell the word, allowing some extra time for making the *k.* Ten words a minute is fast enough to write this word.

PAGE 47

The loop in *b* is similar to that in the three preceding letters. The second part is similar to the last part of *v.* The motions used in making it may be described thus: *up-loop-under, swing.* When writing the word *bell,* name the letters, care being taken to allow more time for *b* than for the others.

PAGE 48

The first part of *q* is like *a* and the last part looks like a lower loop. However, it must be pointed out to the pupils that this loop is not made in the same way as a lower loop, although the two strokes do meet at the line. The motions can be well described by saying: *round-down-turn-swing.* Name the letters when practising the word *queen.*

PAGE 49

The *f* is usually considered the most difficult small letter. The top is an upper loop, and the bottom part, which should be of the same size, is made like the last part of *q.* Some pupils will experience a little trouble in making the down stroke straight, owing to its length and the similarity of direction of the two loops. Each loop is a modification of a left oval, therefore there is a tendency to make the down stroke round instead of straight. A little slower speed will overcome this. Count: *up-loop-down-turn-swing.* When practising the word name the letters, giving ample time for making the *f* and the *r.*

PAGE 50

The pupils will readily recognize that the first part of *z* is the *over* motion and the last part is the *down* loop. In order that there may be no connective loop formed when joining the top part to the bottom, it is necessary to check the motion at the base line. So the count should be: *over-stop-loop.* In writing the word *zoo* there are three pauses; one in the *z* as indicated, and one at the top of each *o.*

PAGE 51

This lesson is a preparation for the sentence that follows on page 52. *Big round o-u-r* is the count.

PAGE 52

The instructions given for the writing of any previous sentence may be applied here. In regard to the omission of the last stroke of the *s* in *is*, it is to be clearly understood that, as far as the development of the writing movement is concerned, there is no gain in either putting it on or leaving it off. But as far as neatness is concerned, there is a decided gain in leaving it off, especially when it is necessary to put a certain number of words in a somewhat limited space. This applies to the omission of any initial or final strokes.

PAGE 53

The digits should be practised first in the order given in the white-on-black copy. When the pupils are able to make them easily and well, they should write them in their regular order. Teach them to be careful of the size of the figures and the spacing between them.

The following is the count to be used in practising the digits:

1.—*straight-down*
4.—*straight-across, straight*
0.—*round-o*
6.—*down-loop*
7.—*tick-curve-straight*
9.—*round-straight*
3.—*loop-round-round,* or *loop-swing-swing*
5.—*straight-round, across* (This stroke must touch the initial one.)
2.—*loop-round-loop*
8.—*round-loop-up.*

XV. HOW TO TEACH MOVEMENT EXERCISES

The aim of all instruction in writing, as has been said before, is to teach pupils a proper writing movement, so that they may write freely, easily, and legibly. For the rapid development and establishment of this movement no method has ever been used that is the equal of general-movement exercises. The motions employed in them are very simple and continuous, so that the pupils can concentrate their attention on the mechanics of writing—posture, pen-holding, and the position of the paper. The mind is not concerned with the making of intricate curves and angles. The attention is chiefly directed to *how* the exercises are being done. Consequently, there is a rapid development of the writing movement.

These general movement exercises—*straight line, left* and *right oval*—furnish sufficient variety, if made large and small, compact and retraced, to prevent the work becoming monotonous to the pupils. However, should there be any tendency in this direction, it may easily be checked by the tact and the enthusiasm of the teacher.

STRAIGHT-LINE EXERCISE

As soon as the pupils know how to sit properly, how to hold the pen correctly, and how to place the paper in correct position on the desk, the next step is learning how to make the straight-line exercise.

It is advisable to use the blunt end of the pencil at first, except in the higher grades, where a dry pen may be used instead.

Show the pupils how to push the arm up and down the line of vision counting *1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10,* for a retraced exercise. When they are able to make these easily and correctly the pencil should be reversed. In order that

the pupils' minds may not be diverted from the mechanical part of the work, it is a good plan to make half the exercise in the air (off the paper) and the other half on the paper. The count to be used is: *1-2-3-4-5-down-1-2-3-4-5.* At the word *down* the pencil is allowed to touch the paper, and the remaining five down strokes are made on the paper. This method also is valuable in relieving the tension resulting from gripping the pencil when making strokes on paper. The word *light* repeated at the same measure as in the case of the digits will also counteract the tendency to make the lines heavy.

First Book pupils should make one hundred down strokes a minute at first, and by a gradual increase should, at the end of their year, make one hundred and fifty. Second Book pupils should be quite capable of making two hundred strokes a minute by the time they are ready for promotion to the Third Book. Practically, no increase in speed above this mark is necessary for any pupils. A proportionate speed applied in the making of letters and words will produce writing sufficiently rapid for all practical purposes.

In the compact straight-line exercise, care must be taken to see that the paper is properly adjusted (Illustration 2, page 6). Have the pupils swing the pen along the blue line, then move the top corner of the paper so as to correct any deviation from the right position. Divide the lines into four equal spaces of about two inches each. Let the pupils move their hands backward and forward along an imaginary line of vision, without touching the paper. When the teacher has counted *1-2-3-4-5,* the word *down* should be given, as a signal for the pencil to come in contact with the paper. This should take place while the pencil is in motion. By moving to the right a little

in making each succeeding down stroke, one hundred down strokes should be made in each quarter section in one half of a minute. Before commencing the second section the paper should be moved toward the left, to take advantage of the ideal writing location mentioned previously on page 18.

At first the pupils will not be able to make one hundred down strokes in each section. Let them indicate the number they have made, say seventy-five, when they come to the dividing line. By aiming to make the lines closer together, it should not take long for every pupil in the class to write the required one hundred strokes in each quarter. When the pupils can make this number at the correct speed, they will have the satisfaction of knowing they are improving. They are getting control over the movement.

Should the lines appear too heavy, it is an indication that the pupil is putting too much pressure on the pen or holding it too tightly. The fine, light lines that are so desirable can be attained only by holding the pen as loosely as possible, and allowing it to touch the paper lightly and delicately. The teacher must be vigilant in warning against the habit of gripping the holder. The pupils addicted to this can never expect to develop a free, easy, swinging movement. As this movement is the objective in teaching writing, and as the straight-line exercise plays an important part, practice on it should not be discontinued until the pupils can do the following: (1) Hold the pen without gripping, (2) make the standard speed, (3) make one hundred strokes in each section.

OVALS

The oval has been a favourite movement drill for years among writing instructors, because of its simplicity and ease in execution. It consists in the repetition of a sort of circular motion which pupils always find easy to make. A little practice soon makes the motion automatic, and then the thoughts may be concentrated largely on the mechanics of writing. In this way the foundation of a proper writing movement is laid.

As soon as the movement has become automatic, or nearly so, the characteristic features of the ovals should be brought to the attention of the pupils by questions or suggestions as to the slant, relative width, and relative height.

The first ovals should be made with a retraced straight-line exercise as a support. This gives them the proper slant. The slant is determined by drawing a line from the middle point of the top to the middle point of the bottom. When folded or cut along this line, the two sections should correspond. (Page 8, Book III)

Before commencing the actual practice of the oval, have the pupils swing over the copy on page 8 a number of times with a dry pen, in order to *sense* the motion. Then have them make the straight-line exercise, five strokes in the air and ten on the paper. Next let them swing around the support without touching the paper, to a count of *1-2-3-4-5.* Instead of saying *6,* the teacher should say *down,* whereupon the pens should be lowered and the ovals made on the paper ten times.

The five preliminary swings off the paper give the pupils an opportunity to get their hands in motion, and to adjust the oval to the correct position around the support. At the same time it lays special stress on *how* they are doing the exercise, not on *what* they are doing. A good

method of counting for this exercise is to say: *Straight 1-2-3-4-5-down-1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10; round 2-3-4-5-down-1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10.* This will ensure that all the pupils do about the same amount of work in the same time.

Should some of the pupils make the ovals too narrow (Plate I, 1 below) the teacher should demonstrate that they are using too much straight-line motion and not enough circular motion. Another fault may be somewhat common—the ovals too wide, as in (2) below. This is the result of too much circular motion and not enough straight-line motion. The ovals should be about three fourths as wide as they are high. In some cases the ovals will be made as in (3) below. The probable cause of this is that the pupils are not pulling the strokes toward the middle of the body, but rather toward the left elbow.

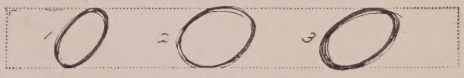

PLATE I

As soon as the pupils can make the retraced oval correctly as to width and slant, they should be drilled on the compact exercise. One plan recommended is to place a retraced straight-line exercise as a guide for slant, at the beginning of each section. Have the pupils strive for lightness and compactness of line, also for correct posture and relaxed muscles.

Pupils should be able to do both right and left ovals with equal facility. The same method of drill applies to both.

One point cannot be over-emphasized. The pen must always be in motion before coming in contact with the paper. Otherwise finger movement may result.

XVI. HOW TO TEACH CAPITAL LETTERS

Every lesson should have a definite purpose. That purpose may be the teaching of a letter, a word, or a sentence; or it may be the development of movement or rhythmic measure, or the increase of speed. Consequently, every lesson should have a definite plan, and every exercise in it should be a part of the plan. The following order is quite commonly used:

1. General-movement practice
2. Special characteristics of the letters noted
3. Practice on the letter
4. Faults noted. Comparison with the copy
5. Practice to overcome the fault
6. Speed practice
7. Time test.

GROUP ONE

Capital *O*:

Owing to its similarity to the left oval, the capital *O* is commonly agreed upon as the best letter with which to commence the application of movement to form. Naturally, then, the lesson should commence with a review of the left oval. A line of the compact exercise would provide the necessary preliminary or preparatory process to enable the pupils to assume correct posture, pen-holding, and position of the paper. The retraced oval gives practice in the same movement as that used in the letter itself.

Using the copy in the *Ontario Writing Courses* as the model, the pupils should be questioned as to the special characteristics of the *O*: (1) shape, (2) size, (3) width, (4) shape of the loop, (5) size of the loop, (6) direction of the last stroke.

Actual practice on the letter should begin by retracing the copy with a dry pen. Next, let the pupils make a left

oval to a count of five off the paper and nine on. On the tenth count, make the characteristic loop at the top, instead of continuing on around the oval. Using the words *loop* or *swing* may help some pupils to make the last stroke by giving a conscious direction to the movement. The count for the oval may be reduced later to five and even to three, but the initial five off the paper should be continued.

The next step is the making of the letter itself. Have the pupils make a retraced left oval off the paper to a count of *1-2-3-down.* Then the pens touch the paper while the teacher counts *1-2, 1-loop, 1-swing,* or *round O.* The *O* thus formed should be retraced five or six times. A good way to count for this practice is to say: *1-2-3-down-1-1, 1-2-3-down-1-2, 1-2-3-down-1-3,* etc. One or two lines made in this way should overcome any nervousness and timidity. Then the letter may be practised separately.

When the pupils have made about one quarter of a page of individual letters, have them pick out the most prominent faults. The most common faults are illustrated in Plate II. Then instruct them how to overcome the faults, either by question or by demonstration.

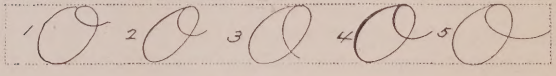

PLATE II

The fault in (1) consists in a sacrifice of speed for the sake of form, and the use of finger movement instead of muscular movement; in (2) the letter is too narrow; more circular motion is needed; and in (3) the loop drops

down too far—about one third of the height of the letter is the proper distance. Number (4) shows too much pressure on the pen. The phrase *light line* uttered at the correct rate of speed will overcome this fault. In (5) the finishing loop is too large.

If pupils are taught to practise in this way they receive a twofold benefit. In addition to learning how to make good letters they also learn how to study and criticise writing. This eventually establishes the habit of self-criticism, one of the most potent influences in the creation of good handwriting.

To arrive at the number of letters that should be written in the speed test, allow two counts for the *O* and one for the transition movement, a total of three. If this number is divided into two hundred (the standard number of down strokes made in the movement exercises in a minute), it is found that about sixty-six would be the standard speed for the *O*. At first, sixty letters a minute is fast enough, with a very gradual increase until the standard number is reached.

During the time the pupils are practising, the teacher should be inspecting the work as rapidly as possible. Common faults in form, incorrect movement, irregular speed, and improper pen-holding should be quietly corrected. Wherever possible, encouragement should be given, not only for success, but especially for effort. Those pupils who find it difficult to apply muscular movement need all the encouragement that can be given.

Capital *C*:

As all the lines in *C* are curved and made directly from the left oval, it is usually considered an easy letter to learn. Practice on the two-space compact left oval and on the one-space retraced left oval should be preliminary

to practice on the *C*. A line or two of the half-space compact oval on Page 17, Book III, would also prove beneficial, as it would help to give control over the movement.

The special features that the attention of the pupils is to be directed to are:

1. The curved strokes forming the loop,
2. The length of the loop,
3. The parallelism of the two down strokes.

As soon as the pupils have noted the special features, have them practise making a small half-space retraced oval without touching the pen to the paper, to a count of *1-2-3-down*. At the command *down* the pen should drop to the paper and form the small loop, and without any check in the movement go on and form five one-space ovals. Count *1-2-3-down-1-2-3-4-5-6*. This drill should be continued until the pupils have become accustomed to the form and the motion used in making it.

In making the individual letters it is always advisable to have the pen form in the air one, two, or three small ovals about the size of the loop, so that the pen will be in motion when it comes in contact with the paper. There is another advantage derived from practice of this kind. It enables the pupil to space the letters more evenly, thus adding neatness and order to the appearance of the page. Count *1-2-down-1-2*.

The most common faults to be avoided in making this letter are illustrated in Plate III.

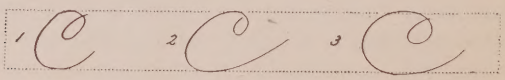

PLATE III

In (1) the letter was made slowly and with finger movement; in (2) the first stroke is made in the wrong direction; in (3) the *C* is too flat.

The pupils must understand that though form is important, the chief objective of the teaching at this juncture is to develop and establish a free, swinging, muscular movement. Though the *C* in (1) more nearly approximates the correct form of the letter, yet from the standpoint of good writing it represents the worst fault of any in the Plate. Free, easy writing will never come to any pupil who persists in practising in the manner indicated.

The number of *C's* to be made in a minute is about sixty. This number is found by dividing the number of ovals made in a minute by three. This latter number is made up of *1-2* for the *C* and *1* for changing from one letter to another. In a test for speed not more than one preparatory oval would be necessary. It should, however, be understood that a test is not to see just how fast the pupils can write, but to find out if they are writing at the standard rate.

Capital *A*:

Before commencing the general-movement drill, see that the paper is in correct position by swinging the pen across the line. Then have the pupils make a line of both the large compact straight line and the left oval.

The main characteristics of the *A* should be brought out by questioning the class. These are: (1) The curved down stroke, which conforms somewhat to the left oval (see *Ontario Writing Courses*); (2) the up stroke, which is almost straight, and which connects with the initial stroke; (3) the slightly curved down stroke, which drops a little below the line.

The left oval forms the basis of the *A*; so the pupils should be drilled on a retraced oval for some time, the count being from one to ten for each. Impress upon them the necessity of having the pen in motion before coming in contact with the paper. Thus it is always necessary to make one or two ovals in the air before actually forming the *A*.

The first practice on the *A* should be made inside the left oval. Swing the pen around the oval once or twice, then let it touch the paper at the top of the oval. Follow the oval about half-way down. When the base line is reached, the pen turns in a sharper curve, with the result that the up stroke passes through the centre of the oval. The final stroke follows the up stroke about one half the way down. Here it commences to curve gently toward the right and ends, finally, just below the base line.

The count for the *A* should be: *1-2-down-1, 2,* with a slight pause at the comma, so that a loop will not be formed by the last two strokes.

The most common faults found in making the *A* are exemplified in Plate IV.

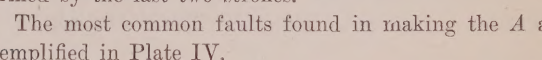

PLATE IV

In (1) the pen touches the paper on the up stroke. In (2) no pause is made at the top of the up stroke, consequently a loop is usually made. In (3) the pen is not pushed up far enough to meet the initial stroke at the starting-point. In (4) the initial stroke is made in the wrong direction. More pull toward the middle of the body will offset this tendency.

As the *A* is made to two counts, like the *O* and the *C*, naturally the same number should be made in a minute—sixty. Of course, by gradually counting faster, the number of *A's* the pupils may make in a minute may be increased to seventy or more.

If we keep in mind the aim of our instruction—the establishment of neat, regular, legible writing—we must use whatever means we can, not only to create a good writing movement, but also to gain control over it. The diminishing exercises on Pages 10 and 11, and the diminishing letters on Pages 16, 17, 18, and 19, will be found to be of great value in gaining control over the movement. The letters of different size should be retraced a number of times before proceeding to the next. Then they should be made separately, in succession, until the half line is completed.

Capital *E*:

The preparatory drill preceding the *E* should consist of a line or two of the large and small retraced left ovals.

The special characteristics of the letter are, (1) the small loop, dot, or tick at the beginning, (2) the small left oval above the line, and (3) the larger oval forming the bottom of the letter. It should also be noted that the little connective loop rests on an imaginary line half-way down.

As the *E* commences with only a dot or a small oval, it is quite hard to get a preparatory movement small enough to be of much benefit in making it. Therefore, all we can do is to use an oval motion about one quarter of a space high. Have the pupils, keeping the dry pen in motion, swing over the letter until they get the *feel* of it, counting *1-2-3* or *dot-1-2*.

The more general faults are illustrated in Plate V.

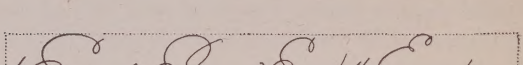

PLATE V

1. The top oval is too wide or flat.
2. The initial loop is much too large.
3. The letter is made too vertical.
4. The bottom oval is too large.

The pupils should always have the copy in front of them. Care must be taken to impress on them that the *Ontario Writing Course* is to be kept at the same angle as the *Ontario Blank Writing Book,* otherwise the pupils may be looking at the copy from an incorrect angle, and naturally would be trying to reproduce on the paper the letter as it *appears* to them.

Since the *E* is made to a count of *1-2-3,* it follows that only forty-five to fifty should be made in a minute. Too rapid a movement will result in illegible letters; and too slow a movement will permit an improper use of the fingers.

GROUP TWO

The letters in this group are all made from the indirect, or right, oval. If the pupils have not already acquired some skill in making this oval, it will be necessary to spend some time in drilling them on it. When we consider that about one half of the capital alphabet may be made with the right oval as a basic movement, and that all the *over* motion used in making the small letters is a modification of it, we can see the necessity of acquiring mastery over it.

Do not allow the pupils to commence the letters in this group until they can do the right oval almost as well as they can the left.

Capital *N*:

The attention of the pupils should be drawn to the distinguishing features of the *N*. These are: (1) The size and shape of the initial loop; (2) the rounded top of the stem; (3) the almost straight down stroke; (4) the rounded top of the second part, which is slightly shorter than the first; (5) the compound curve in the last stroke. This last stroke is quite similar to the last stroke in *A*.

The preparatory drill should consist of a line of the large compact and retraced right ovals. Next, the pupils should practise the large capital stem inside the retraced oval. This is best done by making in the air a small right oval about the size of the loop to a count of *1-2-3-down.* At the word *down,* the pens should touch the paper at the middle of the top of the oval, then form the loop and continue through the oval until they reach the middle point at the bottom. When the stem is made in this way the count is *1-2-3-down-1-2.*

When the pupils can make the stem at the correct rate of speed, they should then try the letter. The count for the *N* is *1-2-down, 1-2-3,* with a short pause at the comma, so as to obviate the making of a loop (which, by the way, is not considered a great fault in either the *N* or the *M*). Next, there should be practice on the one-space letters, retracing them a number of times, in order to give the necessary freedom of movement and confidence to the pupils.

Plate VI illustrates the most common faults in this letter.

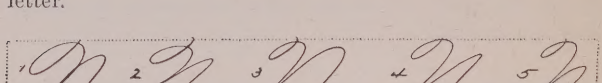

PLATE VI

1. The fault lies in the exceedingly large loop.
2. The stem swings too far to the left. It should meet the base line at a point directly under the left edge of the loop.
3. The second part is much too large.
4. The top of the second part is pointed instead of rounded.
5. The second part is too short.

The number of *N's* to be made in a minute can be easily computed by dividing four into two hundred. This number may be slightly increased by counting more rapidly, but we must not sacrifice legibility for the sake of speed.

Capital *M*:

The *M* is so similar to the *N* that it is hardly necessary to do more than note its characteristic features. The first two parts are exactly like those in *N*. The third part is of the same shape and width as the second, but it is somewhat shorter. The degree of gradation is the same for the last two parts.

In addition to the large retraced oval and straight-line exercise on Page 39, Book III, the extended exercise in the second section will be found a valuable one for cultivating the lateral movement used in making the *M*.

When the pupils can make the last two drills on this page, they should have no difficulty in making a well-formed letter. The parts of these drills should be equally spaced, and in the second drill the parts should be diminished by the same amount.

The count for the *M* should be *1-2-down-1-2, 3-4.* At first the pause at the comma should be quite noticeable, but, when the pupils can make a well-formed *M*, the pause may be appreciably shortened.

The errors most commonly made are illustrated in Plate VII.

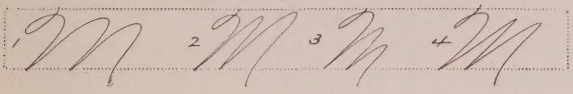

PLATE VII

1. This shows the *M* too wide.
2. The parts, instead of getting shorter, increase in height.
3. The last two parts drop too low.
4. The tops are pointed, instead of being rounded.

The number of *M's* to be made in a minute is determined by dividing five into two hundred. This gives us forty. The five is made up of the necessary four counts required for the *M*, and one for the change to the succeeding letter.

Capital *W*:

The first part of the *W* is almost identical with the stem used in making the *N* or the *M*. There is one slight difference—a little more curve in the last part.

The other important point to be noted is the height of the second part and that of the finished stroke. The former is higher than the stem part, and the latter is about two thirds as high as the letter itself. All the strokes in the *W* are curves, although some writers make the down stroke in the second part straight.

The preliminary practice should be a drill on the right oval, both one-space and two-space. The large, graded compact exercise on Page 40, Book III, is intended for the purpose of gaining command over the movement, as well as for getting the *sense* or *feel* of the motion to be used.

For the *W* the count should be: *1-2-down-1-2-3-4.* Have the pupils check the movement at the base line, at the count *2.*

As this letter requires four counts, naturally the number made in a minute will be forty.

In Plate VIII are illustrated the errors commonly made by pupils.

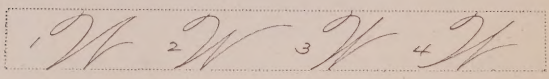

PLATE VIII

1. The up stroke is curved the wrong way.
2. The top of the second part is too low and the final stroke is too long.
3. The points at the bottom are too close together.
4. The stem is swung too far to the left.

Capital *Q*:

This letter is so similar to the figure *2* that practically no one will experience any trouble in making it. All the

strokes are curves; and the movement used is continuous, so that the letter is completed without any check in the motion. The only part that requires special attention is the flat loop at the base line. Note that this loop extends much farther to the left than the stem of all letters made heretofore. The last stroke drops below the base line.

As the movement exercises to be used as preparatory drills are given in the *Ontario Writing Courses,* it is quite unnecessary to refer to them except in some special instances.

The *Q* is made to a count of three. The two preparatory ovals off the paper should not be omitted. When made in this way the number of *Q's* written in a minute will be from thirty-five to forty; but when only one count is used in changing from one letter to another, the pupils will be able to make fifty in the same time.

Most of the faults in connection with the *Q* occur in forming the flat loop. These faults appear in Plate IX.

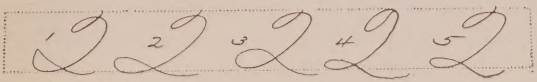

PLATE IX

1. The loop has an angle instead of a curve.
2. The loop is too long and flat.
3. The loop is too large.
4. The letter was made slowly and with finger movement.
5. The pen came to a full stop before being lifted from the paper. It should be raised from the paper while the hand is in motion.

Capital *Z*:

The first part of the *Z* is made like the *Q*. The main feature in it—the connective loop—is made flat, but is not so long as the corresponding loop in the preceding letter. The final stroke forms a lower loop about three quarters as long as the upper part of the letter. Note that the parts of this loop meet at or near the base line. The number of counts required in writing the *Z* is three. Should this seem a little too fast for the class, the teacher need not hesitate to make the count *1-2-3-4*, the up stroke receiving the final count. Considered in this way, the count for the *Z* would be *1-2-down-1-2-3-4*.

On account of the letter being made up exclusively of curves, it affords excellent practice in the application of movement to form. Although it is used but little in actual writing, considerable time should be devoted to it, owing to the skill derived from practising it.

The faults that occur in writing the *Z* arise usually from uncontrolled movement. These are illustrated in Plate X.

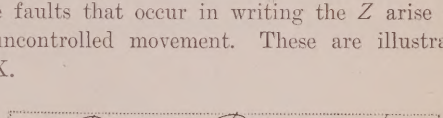

PLATE X

1. The connective loop is too large.
2. The lower loop is too large.
3. The lower loop is made too vertically.

From forty to fifty *Z's* should be made in a minute, according to the number of counts devoted to the letter.

Capital *X*:

This letter is a combination of the capital stem and the figure *6*. A unique feature about it is that it should be as perfect an *X* upside down as it is right side up. In consequence, the initial and final loops must be alike. Another feature that must be noted is the short cross stroke half-way up, used to join the two parts when they happen not to touch.

For preliminary practice there should be a short drill on both the right and the left oval. A good plan of practice at first is to retrace the stem part five or six times to a count of *1-2-down-1-2,* before making the last section of the letter. This should be retraced an equal number of times, the same rhythm being used. Afterwards, of course, the parts should be made in succession.

As each part requires three distinct beats, with an extra beat in changing from the right to the left oval, it follows that the number of *X's* made in a minute will be somewhat limited; possibly not more than thirty or thirty-five can be made in that time. The pupils must not be hurried in changing from one part to another; but they are to make each section at the standard rate.

In Plate XI attention is drawn to the usual errors found in *X*.

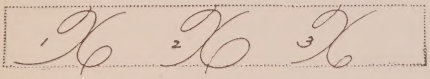

PLATE XI

1. The stem swings too far to the left.
2. The final loop is larger than the initial one.
3. The final loop is smaller than the initial one.

Capital *H*:

Here we have another letter that is a combination of right and left ovals. The preparatory drill should consist of a line or two of each.

Have the pupils observe the following characteristics: (1) The curve at the top of the second part, and (2) the shape and height of the connective stroke.

At first the count for *H* should be *1-2-down-1-2,* for each part. Later on this may be altered, as fewer preparatory motions are made.

The habit of keeping the pen in motion should have become established by this time. The new count may be made thus: *1-2, 3, 4,* with sufficient stop at the first comma to permit of the transition, and at the second, to obviate the forming of a loop at the base line.

The number of *H's* that can be written in a minute will vary according to the number of times the pen forms the oval in the air, before touching the paper. If we utilize the count suggested in the preceding paragraph, we shall be able to write about thirty in a minute.

The most common faults that appear in the *H* are shown in Plate XII.

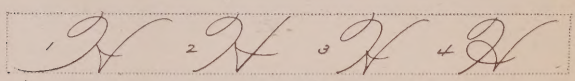

PLATE XII

1. The stem swings too far to the left.
2. The down stroke in the second part is straight.
3. The parts are too close together.
4. The connective loop is too big.
5. No pause in the second stroke or the base line, a loop resulting.

Capital *K*:

The capital stem as found in the *K* is exactly similar to that in *H*. The only feature that requires special attention is the second part. The top and the bottom of this section are made of compound curves, joined together by a very small connective loop. This loop also serves to unite the second part to the first, crossing the latter at a point about half-way down. Observe that the stem is a little shorter than the second section.

The *K* requires the same number of counts as the *H*, *1-2, 3-4*. Consequently, the pupils will make about thirty *K's* in a minute.

Avoid the faults illustrated in Plate XIII.

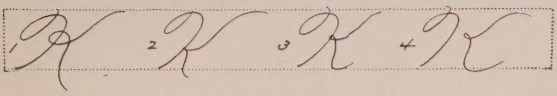

PLATE XIII

1. The loop is too large.
2. The connective loop drops down too far.
3. The second part is made slowly.
4. The two parts of the letter are not joined.

GROUP THREE

The three letters forming this Group are based upon the right oval. But the special feature that distinguishes them from the letters of the preceding Group is the compound curve in the stem part.

Capital *V*:

Besides the compound curve in the stem, the only other characteristics to be noted are: (1) The narrow,

rounded turn at the bottom; and (2) the compound curve in the up stroke. Observe that this last stroke does not come up as high as the stem part.

Until the pupils can make a good compound stem such as we have on Page 52, Book III, it would be advisable to revert to the practice of making the preparatory movement off the paper. At first, then, the count for *V* will be *1-2-down-1-2-3*. Later on, merely counting *1-2-3* should be sufficient.

If the pupils are maintaining the standard speed, they should write fifty *V's* a minute.

Teach the pupils to avoid the faults shown in Plate XIV.

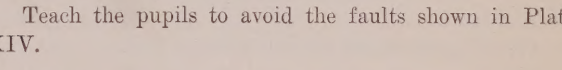

PLATE XIV

1. The last stroke is too long.
2. There is an angle at the bottom, instead of a turn.
3. The turn at the bottom is too big.
4. The last stroke is too short.

Capital *U*:

The first part is similar to that in *V*, while the last is quite like that in the capital *A*. The turn at the bottom of the *U* is broad and round, the up stroke is comparatively straight and the final stroke curves gently toward the right and finishes just below the base line as in *A* and *N*.

Impress upon the pupils the necessity for keeping the pen in motion, both on and off the paper. It is the only way to cultivate a free, swinging movement, and to acquire the touch necessary to produce light, smooth lines.

With this in mind it is well to allow one or two counts before the pen comes in contact with the paper. Count *1-2, 3* for the *U*, pausing slightly at the comma, so as to prevent the making of a loop on the final stroke.

Make about forty *U's* in a minute.

Correct such faults as appear in Plate XV.

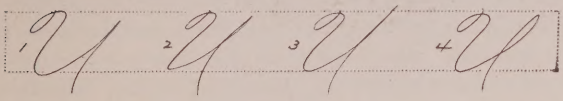

PLATE XV

1. The turn at the base is too broad.
2. The turn at the base is too angular.
3. The up stroke is too high.
4. There is a loop in the last part.

Capital *Y*:

The pupils will readily recognize the similarity between the strokes in *U* and those in *Y*. The main distinguishing features are those in the long straight down stroke, and the lower loop. Notice the apparent parallelism in the two down strokes, also the comparative height and width of the upper and lower loops.

In view of the fact that this letter is almost two spaces high, it will be necessary to use a large, free movement, if we expect to make it successfully. Allow the pupils to practise freely on the two-space straight-line exercises, in preparation for the long stroke in *Y*.

While counting for some of the letters and exercises, the teacher will have noticed, no doubt, that the same amount of time is not given to some exercises as to others, although apparently they have the same number of down strokes. This is due to a difference in emphasis, depend-

ing largely upon the character of the strokes, the turns and angles, and whether the motion is continuous or broken.

The *Y* may be made to a count of *1-2, 3,* but if some pupils find it difficult to apply this rhythm to the letter, it would be wise to add another count for the up stroke. The time would then be measured by counting *1-2, 3-4.*

Considering the length of the letter and the check in the movement, the number of *Y's* made in a minute should be about thirty-five. Persistent practice will enable the pupils to write forty or more *Y's* in the time specified.

Avoid the faults in Plate XVI.

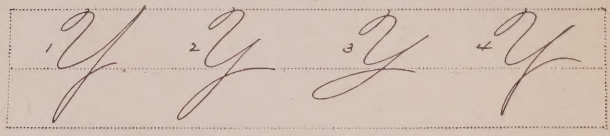

PLATE XVI

1. The second part extends too far up.
2. The second part is too short.
3. The down stroke is pulled too far to the left.
4. Excess of finger movement has broken or bent the down stroke.

GROUP FOUR

This Group consists of three letters—P, R, and B. The basic movements employed in making them are the straight line and the right oval. As a preparatory drill for each of these letters there should be practice on each of these general-movement exercises.

Capital *P*:

Have the pupils observe the special features found in *P*. The down stroke is straight. The up stroke retraces the initial stroke through about half its length, and then swings round in an oval about half the height of the letter. This oval must be closed; that is, the finishing stroke of the oval must touch the two previous strokes.

When making the *P*, care must be taken not to make a loop instead of retracing the down stroke. The best way to obviate doing this is to pause slightly at the base before commencing the up stroke. The count for the letter then will be *1, 2*. The number of letters made in a minute should be from fifty to sixty, depending upon the time spent in preparatory movement.

The most common faults are shown in Plate XVII.

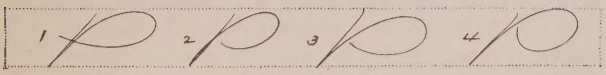

PLATE XVII

1. The oval is too big and flat.
2. The oval is not completed.
3. The down stroke is not retraced enough.
4. The final stroke is made in the wrong direction.

Capital *R*:

The first part of the *R* is exactly like the *P*, and the last stroke is the same as the final stroke in *K*. The only features which the pupils need notice specially are the size, slant, and relative position of the small connective loop. The count for *R* is *1, 2-3*. Therefore the number of *R's* that should be made in a minute is from forty to fifty.

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Avoid the faults in Plate XVIII.

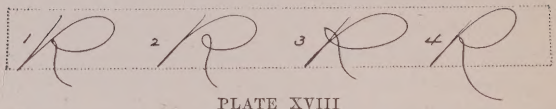

PLATE XVIII

1. The down stroke is not retraced far enough.
2. The connective loop does not touch the stroke.
3. The oval is too big and flat.
4. The final stroke is too long.

Capital *B*:

The *B* is very similar in construction to the two preceding letters. The special characteristics to observe are: (1) The two right ovals forming the right half of the letter, (2) the position and slant of the connective loop, and (3) the final hook. It is well to point out that a line drawn as a tangent touching the right-hand edge of each oval will be parallel with the stem. Count *1, 2-3, 4,* and make about thirty-five to forty *B's* in a minute.

The mistakes to be avoided in making the *B* are illustrated in Plate XIX.

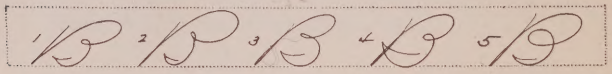

PLATE XIX

1. The stem is not retraced sufficiently.
2. The top oval is wider than the bottom one.
3. The lower loop is wider than the upper one.
4. The last stroke swings too far through.
5. The connective loop is too large.

GROUP FIVE

The two letters in this Group, *I* and *J*, are grouped together on account of the similarity between the tops of the letters. The same motion is used in making this part in both letters.

Capital *I*:

A critical analysis of the *I* will show the following to be the chief characteristics: (1) The curved up stroke, (2) the narrow turn at the top, (3) the slightly curved down stroke ending in a broad turn corresponding to the arc of the oval, and (4) the final hook similar to that in the *B*.

Make a compact right oval as a preparatory drill for the *I*. Next, make a retraced right oval, and without lifting the pen swing down through the oval to the left of the centre and finish with a hook, as shown on Page 51, Book II.

Another excellent exercise for practice in connection with the *I* is found on Page 82, Book II. Besides establishing the motion used in making the letter, it also results in giving command over a complicated movement.

Count *1-2, 3* for the *I*, and make from forty-five to fifty capital *I's* a minute.

Avoid the faults indicated in Plate XX.

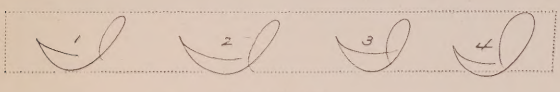

PLATE XX

1. The initial stroke should start at the base line.
2. The turn at the bottom is too long.
3. The three lines should meet at a point.
4. The oval part is too wide.

Capital *J*:

Before beginning the discussion of the *J* it would be well to remind the pupils of the value of maintaining a correct writing position. See to it that the paper is held correctly, by swinging the pen across the line and then adjusting the top corner of the paper.

In the *J* the part above the line is quite similar in movement and shape to the upper part of *I*. There is one slight difference—the turn in the latter is narrower than in the former. In the *J* the loop is approximately half the width of the oval. The lower loop resembles the corresponding part in *Y*. Comparing the lower loop with the upper, we find it to be approximately half as wide and two thirds as long.

Make a right oval, one space high, retraced. Without checking the movement, swing down through the base line, and finish with a lower loop. (See Page 83, Book II.) As soon as the pupils can make this exercise successfully they should practise making the letter without the aid of the oval.

The count for the *J* is *1-2-3*. Make from forty to fifty letters in a minute.

Avoid the faults shown in Plate XXI.

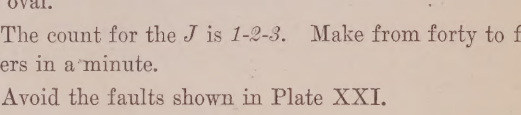

PLATE XXI

1. The upper loop is too large.
2. The lower loop is too large.

3. The down stroke is too rounded.
4. The back of the letter is broken, caused by finger movement.

GROUP SIX

There are only two letters in this Group, and they are so much alike that the same instructions are applicable to both.

The basic movement for both the *T* and the *F* is the figure-eight exercise, as it is commonly called. (See Page 56, Book II, and Page 62, Book III.) Beginning at the top, swing down in a compound curve, then upward in another compound curve. The two loops thus formed should be of equal size.

The down stroke of *T* is a compound curve, ending at a point about one third of the way up. The finishing stroke is a hook similar to that in *B* or *I*. In *F*, this hook is continued through the down stroke at a point midway of the stem. A short tick completes it. The top part commences with a loop like that in the capital stem, and is finished with a compound curve. This top part does not touch the stem, and should be as far to the left of it as it is above it. Always make the bottom part first.

The movement used in making these two letters is not so easy as it looks; consequently, some time should be spent in drilling on them. It is not wise at any time to leave a form only imperfectly learned. The best plan is to learn it well, even if it takes more time than was anticipated.

The count for the *T* is *1-2, 3-4,* and for the *F, 1-2-3, 4-5.* About forty *T's* and thirty-five *F's* a minute should be considered a good rate of speed.

Common faults to be avoided in Plate XXII.

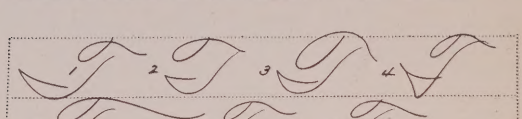

PLATE XXII

1. The turn is too broad.
2. The top is too far to the left.
3. The top is much too big.
4. The turn at the base line is too angular.
5. The top is too long.
6. The tick on the *F* is too large.
7. The hook extends too far through.

GROUP SEVEN

The two letters comprising this Group are made with the same basic movement as those in the preceding Group. The main distinguishing feature between the two Groups is an initial up stroke, thus forming a loop somewhat similar to that in *l*.

Capital *S*:

Commence the *S* on the line. The up stroke must be well curved or the letter will be too long and too slanting. The compound curve crosses the up stroke at a point half the height of the letter. The finishing stroke is exactly similar to that in *T*. Be sure that the oval part at the bottom is well rounded, not sharp or angular.

The count for *S* is *1-2, 3*. There is a very brief pause at the comma, so that the hook part may be made on the

proper slant and without a loop. Make about fifty *S's* in a minute. This number is found by dividing two hundred by four.

The value of the hook finish in such letters as *I, B,* and *S* will be readily understood when the element of speed is taken into consideration. The more pauses we have to make in our writing, the slower the writing will be. So wherever it is possible to join one letter to another without sacrificing the legibility, it is a good thing to do so. These hook endings will be found of great value for this purpose.

The common faults in *S* are illustrated in Plate XXIII.

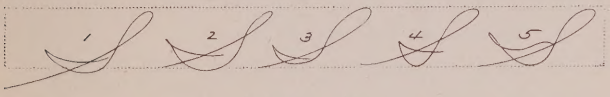

PLATE XXIII

1. The initial stroke commences below the line.
2. The lines do not cross midway. The upper loop is too short.
3. The lines cross too low down.
4. The turn at the bottom is too angular.
5. The hook is made with a loop.

Capital *L*:

The special features that need to be noticed in the *L* are: (1) The initial stroke commences a little more than half-way up, (2) the upper loop is a compound curve half the length of the letter, and (3) the down stroke is a compound curve. Observe also (4) the flat loop at the bottom similar to that in *Q*. The final stroke ends below the line in a compound curve.

The count for *L* is *1-2-3* or *swing-1-2*. Make about fifty *L's* in a minute.

It is not advisable to join *L* to a following small letter. A good general rule to follow in writing is to make the letters appear equidistant from one another; and this is impossible if we attempt to join the final stroke in *L* or *Q* to the letter that follows.

Avoid the faults shown in Plate XXIV.

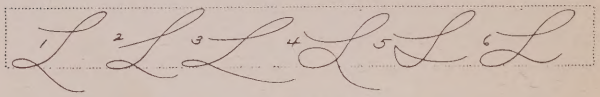

PLATE XXIV

1. The lines do not cross midway.
2. The up stroke commences in the wrong direction.
3. The down stroke is almost straight.
4. The loop at the base line is too round and big.
5. The flat loop should not have an angle in it.
6. The final stroke does not end below the base line.

GROUP EIGHT

Although the two remaining letters of the alphabet do not look much alike, yet there is considerable similarity of movement in making them. The basic movement in both letters is the left oval.

Capital *G*:

The beginning and ending strokes in *G* are the same as those in *S*, although the upper loop in *G* is a little longer than that in *S*. The part of the letter made on the count *Q* is the outline of a small left oval, and that part comprising the count *3* is a right oval about the same size as the left. Have the pupils study carefully the

proportions of the letter in the copy, and compare their own with it frequently. It is only by comparison that we can hope to perfect our forms, through becoming conscious of our own errors.

Count *1-2-3, 4* for *G*, and make about thirty-five to forty copies of the letter in a minute.

Avoid the faults illustrated in Plate XXV.

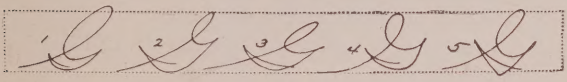

PLATE XXV

1. The strokes cross too low down.
2. The strokes cross too far up.
3. The initial stroke is not curved to the left sufficiently.
4. There is too much curve to the left in the up stroke.
5. The turn at the bottom is sharp instead of round.

Capital *D*:

The down stroke in *D* is a compound curve. This part of the letter is quite like the corresponding stroke in *L*, even to the flat loop at the base line. The last part of *D* is a left oval, finished exactly in the same manner as *O*.

Of course, these exercises should be reviewed before proceeding to practise the *D*.

The count for the *D* is *1-2-3* or *1-2-swing*. Make about fifty *D's* in a minute.

Avoid the faults illustrated in Plate XXVI.

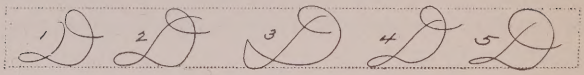

PLATE XXVI

1. The first stroke is made in the wrong direction.
2. There is too much compound curve in the first stroke.
3. There is an angle in the flat loop.
4. The second part of *D* does not touch the line.
5. The final loop is too big.

XVII. HOW TO TEACH SMALL LETTERS

From Page 29 to Page 42 detailed instructions are given for teaching the small letters to Primary Grade pupils. These instructions will apply in a general way when teaching the same letters to pupils in the grades above the Primary. Of course, as the pupils become older, there will be a gradual increase in speed until the maximum standard rate is reached. There will also be a slight variation in the rate and the method of counting. Instead of giving a conscious direction to the strokes through describing the motion, the teacher may count for as many strokes as he thinks require special emphasis. Care must be taken not to spoil the rhythm and to maintain a speed commensurate with the standard required of the grade.

There are one or two features that require special attention in the grades above the Primary. These are dealt with in the paragraphs that follow.

The movement used in making the capitals is generally large. In consequence, there is not the necessity for such a nicety of control over the movement as is called

for in the small letters. The form may deviate considerably from the perfect without becoming conspicuous, because of the small proportion the deviation bears to the whole. On the other hand, a slight deviation in the small letters at once becomes apparent. To write in good form in the case of the small letters requires a highly developed precision of movement and conception of form; and this the pupils rarely possess. It is evident, therefore, that the pupils will at first approximate more nearly to apparent perfection of form in capitals than in small letters. But on account of the greater frequency with which the small letters recur, and the consequent greater amount of practice on them, in time they will write both equally well. However, as absolute perfection is scarcely expected, pupils may be able to apply the movement they have acquired in such a way as to produce letters that are comparatively legible and yet fall short of perfection of form.

As a preparation for the greater degree of movement control demanded by the small letters, it is advisable to drill thoroughly on the small general-movement exercises, such as the half-space and third of a space straight line and ovals. Unfortunately, these exercises are so small that they can be made with finger movement. Warn the pupils against this temptation, and allow no finger movement, even if thereby they are able to make the forms better and neater.

When the pupils can do these drills satisfactorily, it will be time to begin the critical study of the letters in the order in which they are given in the *Ontario Writing Courses*. As soon as the first letter has been studied, the following plan for practising the minimum letters may be applied to it.

Have the paper divided into four equal sections, as was done for the capitals. Commencing at the lower left-hand corner of the first section, make a right curve ending a little to the right of the middle of the line above. Bring the pen down to the base line, following the main slant, and finish with a curve similar to the first. Count for the main strokes only. The descriptive phrase *up-up* will, in the beginning, serve the purpose probably better than any other mode of counting. Drill in this way until all the pupils can do the exercise easily, rapidly, and rhythmically.

To find if all are doing the work in unison, tap gently on the table with a pencil to indicate the time, and listen intently to the pens moving on the paper. If the teacher can hear the "scratch-scratch, scratch-scratch" of the pens as they form the up strokes, without any other sound from the pens to break the rhythm, he may be reasonably sure that the pupils are working in unison.

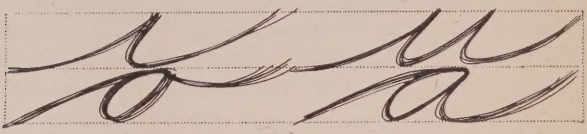

PLATE XXVII

In Plate XXVII illustrations are given of how to practise *i, u, o,* and *a,* according to the plan described above. For *o* the count may be *up-down-swing,* and for *a, up-down-up.*

The aim of practice of this kind is to teach the form through a movement that is large enough to be made easily. By decreasing the size of the letter to two thirds of a space and later to the standard size for all minimum

letters—one third of a space—the pupils will gradually acquire control over the movement.

As soon as the pupils can make the letter well, they should write it in groups. At first these groups should contain three letters to a section. The wide spacing tends to develop the lateral movement, and to give control through placing the letters at regular, specified points. In addition, practising in the manner indicated helps to establish the habits of neatness and order—two essentials to success in writing.

Be careful about the spacing between the letters. Spacing that is too narrow is detrimental to free movement, especially with junior pupils. When the spaces are very short the letters can be made easily with finger movement. Naturally the pupils prefer the easier way; and unless the teacher is alert, they will want to discard the muscular movement they have already acquired.

It is not necessary to go further into detail regarding the small letters. The size of the letters, the number to be written in each section, and the correct count for each, are all indicated in the *Ontario Writing Courses*. This information, together with what has been said under Primary Grade Writing, should be all that the teacher needs in order to do this work successfully.

XVIII. HOW TO TEACH WORDS

It should not be taken for granted that because pupils can make movement exercises and letter drills with good movement and at the standard rate, and letters and groups of letters freely, rapidly, and with good muscular control, that they will be able to combine letters into words with the same freedom and with like results. Such is not

always the case. Combining into words letters which the pupils have already practised, requires as much study and practice as the learning of a new letter. There are many things to be noted. The size of the letters, the spaces between them, the initial and ending strokes, and the general appearance of the word must be carefully observed.

To write words well presupposes the possession of considerable muscular control as well as a good conception of form. It follows, then, that the best plan is to practise a few simple words with the letters of which the pupils are already familiar. By this method the mind is free to concentrate largely on the movement used and on gaining control over it. If difficult words are selected, the pupil is forced to think too much of what he is doing, and neglects the means by which he does it. To select new words with unfamiliar and difficult letters would ruin the movement already developed.

It should be kept constantly in mind that the aim of the instruction is the creation of a proper writing movement. Word writing, while an exceedingly valuable thing in itself, should be largely considered as a means to the end desired. If pupils use good movement and make the forms rhythmically and at the standard speed, there is no doubt that word practice affords an excellent means to establish and gain control over the writing movement.

As an illustration of the way words should be taught, we shall take the word *mine,* Page 26, Book II. In teaching a word, a plan similar to that used for the letters is to be followed. The general appearance of the word should be noted. Next, the special features, the size and width of the letters, the width of the spacing, the length of the

beginning and ending strokes, and any difficult combinations of letters should be noted.

Observe that the word occupies a quarter section, consequently the spacing is comparatively wide. The first stroke of *m* begins on the line, and the final stroke in *e* is made as high as the minimum letters. Counting for letters is a comparatively simple matter, but the same cannot be said of words. In a letter or group of letters the strokes occur regularly. In words this regularity is lacking, owing to the varying number of strokes in different letters. For instance, *m* has three down strokes, *n* has two, and *i* and *e* have one each. Consequently, it is difficult by simply counting to indicate the time required to make each letter. The best way is to name the letters. In the word *mine,* take care to prolong the sound of *m* more than that of the other letters. It also is apparent that the time required for either *i* or *e* is less than for *n*.

To determine the standard rate at which the word is to be written is the next step. The rate at which the general-movement exercises is made will be the basis for our calculation. There are seven down strokes in the word, and allowing one for the change from one word to the next, we have a total of eight. Dividing eight into two hundred, we have twenty-five as our standard rate.

At first the rate will be somewhat slower than this; but when the pupils have become accustomed to the angles and turns in the word, the standard rate should be required. By gradually increasing the count, the number of words written in a minute may be increased to twenty-eight or even thirty, without in any way sacrificing the form.

There is another point which requires to be noted in connection with the speed at which the writing should be done. If only the number of strokes is taken into consideration, often too high a speed would be made, with a consequent sacrifice of good form. Due recognition should be given to the checks in the movement in making certain letters. Wherever a stroke has to be retraced, as in *o*, *w*, *v*, and *b*, there should be a slight pause before making the retracing. If this is not done little defects will appear, which not only lessen the legibility but also detract considerably from the neatness and beauty of the writing. It is to be expected that many defects will appear in the pupils' writing. There will be defects in form, in movement, and in uniformity. Besides varying in size, there will be a great variation in the slant and the spacing of the letters. These two features require special care. Unless the straight down strokes are made parallel with the line of vision, the letters composing the word will present an unpleasing lack of uniformity.

Many defects in form are due to lack of control over the writing movement. In cases of this kind, to improve the form will require patience and earnest practice. But it is also true that some of the faults are due to misconceptions on the pupils' part of the forms they are trying to reproduce. Unfortunately, many pupils do not observe closely. They fail to see the little things that go to make up the difference between a good and a poor letter. Only by showing pupils *where* they are wrong and *how* to correct the error, can such defects as these be remedied.

In connection with the defective spacing referred to above, it may be noted that the cause of this defect is traceable to poor movement. If the hand moves forward in an even, regular fashion, the spacing between words

will be as regular as is the movement. But if finger movement is used, or the side of the hand, or the wrist is allowed to touch the paper, the writing will exhibit marked irregularities in the spaces between the letters. The remedy consists in cultivating a movement that will carry the hand across the page in an even, unhesitating way.

Avoid the faults shown in Plate XXVIII.

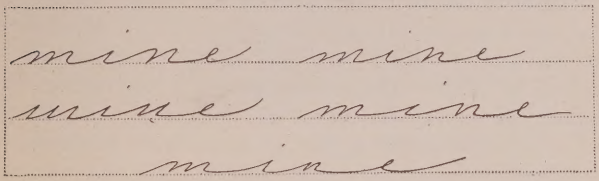

PLATE XXVIII

1. Slow finger-movement writing,
2. Very irregular in size,
3. The tops and bottoms of the letters are too angular,
4. The slant is very irregular,
5. Irregular spacing between the letters.

XIX. HOW TO TEACH SENTENCES

Just as some pupils are able to make good letters and yet are unable to combine them well into words, so some pupils can write words well and yet are unable to combine them successfully into sentences. To write a sentence well is a good test of a pupil's writing ability. It shows that he has mastered the writing movement, and that he is capable of applying the movement so as to produce a plain, neat, legible, and graceful sentence; and that is one of the main objects which we have had in view from the first.

How can this object be attained? The answer to that is best determined by a consideration of the characteristics exhibited by a well-written sentence.

The first characteristic is good *movement*. The effect of such a movement is easily discernible in the smoothness and evenness of the strokes. If the lines are broken or tremulous, or if the up strokes are light and the down strokes are heavy, it can mean but one thing. The pupil is not using good muscular movement. Close observation by the teacher will prove the truth of this statement. The character of the lines reveals perfectly the manner in which the writing was done. Even defects of pen-holding are noticeable in the strokes. Light upward strokes and heavy lateral strokes indicate that the pen-point is not being held squarely on the paper. Such a fault as this needs to be corrected before the lines will take on the smooth, even appearance essential to good writing.

A second characteristic, and one closely related to that of movement, is *speed*. Weak, wavy, and broken lines are a sign that the movement is too slow; while rounded down strokes are an indication of either too rapid a movement or carelessness in the movement. From this we may conclude that standard speed will produce neat, legible forms, and will also ensure that the writing is being done both easily and efficiently.

Another characteristic that every well-written sentence possesses is *uniformity*. This is achieved through control having been gained over the writing movement. The letters are uniform in size and slant; and the spacing between letters, as well as between words, is marked by the same characteristic. A sentence possessing this quality will be orderly, graceful, and beautiful in appearance.

The last characteristic to be noted is *form*. If the pupils have not a proper conception of form, it stands to reason that the writing will be neither legible nor neat. *Form* relates not only to the make-up of the letters, but to the arrangement of letters in words, and of words in sentences. Under *form* must also be included the length of initial and final strokes. By paying strict attention to these details a pupil should have no difficulty in writing a sentence that is plain, neat, and beautiful.

Consideration of these characteristics leads to the conclusion that writing a sentence demands considerable skill on the part of the pupils. For this reason it is not well to commence with sentences that present difficult combinations of letters. There should be a gradual increase in difficulty. By this progressive method the pupils will gain confidence, which will be of value when they come to those sentences that are made up of a variety of letters that are not only difficult in themselves but more so in combination with others.

In order that the sentence may possess these characteristics, the plan of practice should be somewhat after this fashion:

1. There should be practice on the different words composing the sentence. This will help to make the pupils familiar with the combinations in each word. In this way, too, the speed may be materially increased, thus giving smoothness and evenness to the lines.

2. The words should be written in columns. The purpose in writing them in this way is to give neatness and order through having uniformity in spacing between letters and between words. When the pupils endeavour to put each letter exactly in line with the one above, it is an

evidence that they are striving to control the movement; and every success means one step nearer the goal.

3. Faults should next be noted, and checked in red ink if possible. Those faults that are peculiar to one pupil only may be corrected at his desk; but those that are common to a number in the class should be corrected at the board. Merely showing pupils, at this stage in the work, *why* they are wrong may often suggest *how* to correct the error.

4. From having written the words in columns, the pupils should have a good idea of how the sentence looks as far as neatness and arrangement are concerned. Therefore they should be ready to write, in succession, the words forming the sentence. Persistent, intelligent practice of this kind should enable any pupil who has a good movement control to write a sentence that possesses all the characteristics that every well-written sentence exhibits.

5. Writing a paragraph presents practically no difficulty to those who can write sentences well. A certain amount of care is required to see that no displeasing effects are caused by upper loops or capitals coming in contact with lower loops. To prevent such an occurrence it is necessary that the writing be not too large. A size that will meet all requirements is that in which the minimum letters are one fourth of a space in height and the capitals and loop letters three times as high as the minimum letters.

The only other point to be observed, especially in paragraph writing, is the *indention* of the first line. The first word of a paragraph should always commence about one inch from the margin.

Business forms require that special attention be given to the arrangement of the words so as to secure simplicity,

grace, and beauty. Eliminate, as far as possible, all long and irregular ending strokes.

XX. HOW TO TEACH SIGNATURES

It is often said that signature writing is the final test of a writer's skill. Whether it is true or not, one thing is certain—it takes all the skill that a pupil possesses to produce a graceful, legible signature.

It is not to be understood that any combination of letters will produce a beautiful signature even when written by a master writer. Many letters cannot be joined together except by a multiplicity of lines which destroy the very essentials that every signature should possess—legibility and beauty.

The main points to be noted in connection with signature writing are: (1) Simplicity of outline, (2) uniformity in slant and direction of the strokes, (3) application of the principle of perspective, whereby the first letter is a little taller than the second, which in turn is taller than the third, (4) similarity of main strokes wherever possible.

Encourage the pupils to strike out boldly; and insist upon their using muscular movement. It is important before the pupil begins to write a signature that he should have a clear conception of the character of the combination of letters which compose it; otherwise the reproduction will fall far short of the original. Spacing will need to be looked after carefully, or the signature will be devoid of the regularity that helps to make it beautiful.

At least two pages of each signature should be made, in order that the pupils may be able to apply the movement skilfully.

XXI. HOW TO TEACH THE MARKING ALPHABET

The marking alphabet is used largely in marking parcels, card indexes, headings, ledger headings, etc. The materials needed are an ordinary pen-holder, a fine, flexible pen-point, and well-calendered paper.

The paper should be held so that the lines are parallel with the edge of the desk. The pen is held in the same way as in ordinary writing. The movement used in forming the letters is a combined finger and muscular movement.

There is no attempt made at speed in doing this alphabet. About the same speed is required as a person would use in forming print characters. Accuracy of form and uniformity of slant and spacing are so essential that it is much better to be sure than speedy, especially at first. Close observation of the forms and strict attention to the manner of making them are necessary, or the efforts of the pupil will result in failure.

The main point to observe is that the maximum width of the shade comes midway of the stroke; while each stroke begins and ends in a hair-line.

XXII. A STANDARD OF MEASUREMENT

Some standard for measuring the writing product seems to be necessary, owing to the difference in the attainments of pupils, and also to the difference of opinion among all classes of people, educators included, as to what constitutes good writing. Some consider that if the product is legible, no matter how slowly it may have been written, it is good writing. In this case the amount of time and energy needed to produce the writing is entirely left out of the calculation. Others go so far as

to say that writing of this kind is not writing at all; it is merely drawing. They assert that only writing which is done with speed and good movement constitutes good writing. In these circumstances it is only natural that there should be great difficulty in grading writing with any degree of unanimity; therefore some attempt to arrive at a means of placing a value upon the writing of pupils must be made.

A few teachers of writing have endeavoured to measure the writing product by means of a *scale*. Some of these scales have been tried in a few schools in the United States; but it appears from reports issued from authentic sources that experimentation with them has proven that, while more difficult of application, they are no more reliable than the ordinary method of grading by percentage.

However that may be, the use of a scale for measuring writing partakes too much of the nature of a machine. The human element in writing seems to be ignored; and any system of measuring writing that ignores the writer cannot accurately gauge his writing. In other words, any system that attempts to measure the writing of a pupil without knowing how that pupil sits at his desk, cannot place a correct valuation on his writing. A scale may be able to measure the product, but it cannot correctly measure all the phases of the process.

There is no doubt that, to a careful observer, the character of the writing reveals many things that are not plain to others. The kind of movement used, the manner of holding the pen, and the position of the hand are quite plain to one who has studied this question carefully. But the stroke does not reveal whether the pupil is sitting in a hygienic position or not. Since health is of so much

importance, some consideration should be given to this matter in gauging the writing product.

To arrive at a just standard of valuation of the writing product, a correct idea of what is meant by good writing should prove helpful. Let us then consider, as briefly as possible, what are generally recognized as the essential qualities in satisfactory writing.

What constitutes excellence in writing depends largely upon the point of view of the person concerned. Should he be the reader, naturally he will view it from the stand-point of recognition. But if he is the writer, he will look at it from the stand-point of production. Therefore, in determining a standard of measurement, these two phases must not be overlooked. The time and the energy the writer spends on production are of as much importance as the time and the energy the reader spends in recognition.

To appraise the efficiency of writing, then, we should have some means of determining the energy expended in doing it. Suppose that two pupils put forth the same amount of effort. One, however, writes only half what the other does in a given time. It, therefore, stands to reason that one pupil is spending double the amount of energy that is actually required; and since it is not actually required it is wasted.

Determination of the amount of energy required is concerned exclusively with the mechanics of writing—the mode of production, to which we shall now turn.

The first factor to be considered is *posture*. The amount of energy expended depends largely upon the posture which the pupils assume. In so far as the posture is unhygienic, cramped, or uncomfortable, just so far will there be a waste of force. But where the posture fulfils

the requirements of health, freedom, and comfort, then the writing will be done with the greatest economy of energy.

The second factor concerned in the mode of production is *movement*. When writing is done with the finger movement, an undue tax is put upon the small muscles of the hand, and the fingers become tired and cramped. The result is a serious loss of nervous energy to the writer. In addition, when speed is demanded, the letters produced by finger movement lose greatly in legibility, with a consequent loss in energy to the reader.

It is only when a well co-ordinated muscular movement is used that writing can be produced with economy of energy. The tax is put upon the large muscles of the arm and shoulder; and the hand glides easily on the nails of the third and fourth fingers. Thus the writing is done in an easy, tireless, economical way.

A concomitant of the ease of production resulting from a free movement is the third element—*speed*. Slow writing produces weak, tremulous lines, so that sometimes even its legibility is impaired, although that is the one quality that would usually be expected to accompany such writing. When standard speed is attained, the lines become strong and even, and the letters stand out plainly to view.

In addition to estimating the efficiency of the writing, there is another side to be considered—measuring the quality of the product. What are the qualities that go to make writing good or bad? What are the features that make some writing easy to read and some hard to read?

Naturally, in determining the excellence of the product, the first thing to consider is the *form* of the letters. This constitutes the fundamental basis of legibility. In order, then, that the product may be legible, it is essential that

the letters conform to the standard form. Deviations will occur owing to speed and lack of control over the movement. But as long as the deviations do not depart too far from the fundamental features of the letter, no serious drawback will ensue.

Another characteristic excellence that good writing undoubtedly possesses is *uniformity*. There must be uniform size and slant in letters and uniform spacing between letters in a word and between words in a sentence. Lack of uniformity detracts, to a certain extent, from the legibility, and, to a much greater extent, from the neatness, grace, and beauty of the writing.

In endeavouring to arrive at a standard for measuring the excellence of writing, we have seen that there are two main factors that must be considered—the *process* and the *product*. The next problem is how to apportion a value for each of these factors.

The objective that the instruction has in view should vary considerably with almost every class. With junior pupils the process is almost all-important, the product being a minor consideration. With senior pupils (those who have been trained in muscular movement from the Primary Grade up), the process should have become largely automatic. Correct habits of writing should have become established, and the movement well co-ordinated. The product, then, must become of increasing importance. Accordingly, the standard of measurement should vary to suit the needs of the class.

Any standard that is used to measure the writing must make provision for all the factors already mentioned. In the percentage standard given below these factors are taken into account.

PERCENTAGE STANDARD OF MEASUREMENT

	Primary First and Second Classes	Third and Fourth Classes	Fifth Class
Posture	35	20	15
Movement and Speed	35	30	25
Form	30	50	60

A word of warning needs to be given here against too strict an adherence to the standard. It is only a relative standard, not an absolute one. Mastery over the movement should be the determining factor in almost every case. Some pupils in a senior class may not have mastered the movement, consequently it would be unfair to them to apply the class schedule; the schedule of a lower class should be applied in such cases. And where a junior pupil rapidly develops a good movement, obviously the schedule of a higher class should be used in his case.

There is another phase of this matter that needs to be kept in mind. The class schedule should not be applied until the pupils have had the amount of practice in muscular movement that their particular grade of class requires. That is, it would evidently be unjust to apply the schedule of a Second or a Third Class to one just beginning the study of muscular-movement writing.

XXIII. WRITING IN UNGRADED SCHOOLS

The problem confronting the teacher of an ungraded school is much more complex than the one which the teacher of the graded school has to meet. There are so many classes and so many other subjects that it is difficult to find time to do the work as it should be done. Yet the

earnest, ingenious teacher will evolve some plan whereby the work will be done successfully, just as he has evolved plans to overcome difficulties that have arisen in connection with other subjects.

All that can be done in a Manual of this kind is to make some suggestions which the teacher may use as a working basis to formulate a plan whereby muscular-movement writing may be given a chance to show that it is able, even in a rural school, to develop in the pupils a style of writing that is easy to write and easy to read.

The main factor to be considered is that of *time*. The number of classes and the number of pupils in the classes usually is dependent upon the number of pupils attending the school. To the small rural school the question presents no real obstacle; but to the large school with its many and large classes it presents a more complicated problem.

The chief difficulty arises in the first year after the adoption of muscular-movement writing. The problem is how to get time to teach all the pupils the essential steps, when there are so many classes to teach. However, this part of the work is almost the same for all, from the youngest to the oldest; and the instructions regarding posture, pen-holding, and movement may be taught simultaneously to all the pupils. Or, preferably, two divisions may be formed of the classes, and each division may be instructed separately. The first division should comprise the Primary, First, and Second Classes, and the second division the remaining classes in the school.

When teaching the junior group, endeavour to arrange it so that when one class is at the board, the other classes are practising at the desk. A copy should be written on the board for each class. The teacher must watch for defects in posture, movement, and pen-holding. In the

meantime he should be counting. All the classes in this group should commence with the Primary copies, and continue to practise the work as outlined up to and including that for their own class.

When the classes are very large the work may be simplified considerably for the teacher by having some of the senior pupils, who know how it should be done, assist the more helpless of the younger pupils. Or, while the teacher is busy critically examining the practice work of the pupils, a senior pupil who has an ear for rhythm may count. Such a plan, besides being helpful to the teacher, will add interest to the work among senior pupils.

Whenever it is possible, the junior division should have two periods a day, one in the forenoon and one in the afternoon. The periods need not be longer than ten minutes.

With the pupils of the senior division a plan somewhat similar may be used, even to the board writing, especially during the first month or two. A copy for each class in the group should be written on the board, and brief oral instructions should accompany each. One period a day of twenty minutes should be sufficient, preferably just before recess. At that time the pupils' nerves are calm, and they are not yet fatigued by the exacting work of the day.

There is another point that must not be forgotten. Until such time as the pupils have had a thorough training in the essential steps of muscular movement, it would be unreasonable to expect them to begin at once with the work prescribed for their class, except in the case of Book II, Part I and Book III, Part I. Each Book is so arranged that there is a gradual increase in difficulty from the first exercise to the last. Part I, Books II and III, contains a complete course of graded writing. There

are enough copies contained in it for a year's work. The Fourth Class should review the work for the Third Class before commencing Part II, Book II. A similar plan is to be followed in Form II of the High School.

The arrangement of the different parts of the *Ontario Writing Courses* in relation to the classes is as follows:

Book I:

Part I is for use in Form I, Junior Grade.
Part II is for use in Form I, Senior Grade.
Part III is for use in Form II.

Book II:

Part I is for use in Form III.
Part II is for use in Form IV.

Book III:

Part I is for use in Form V, or Form I of Continuation Schools or High Schools.
Part II is for use in Form II of Continuation Schools or High Schools.

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